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# CRIMES OF THE YEAR



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**BY**  
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**TO**  
**EDMUND AND MITZI**  
**BARACH**



## FOREWORD

Every modern war forges new weapons and a new technique. Crime too is war, even when committed in time of peace; it is war against the individual as well as against society. Is modern crime also creating new weapons and new technique? If so it behooves society to know it.

In this book are the outstanding crimes committed within the year in different parts of the world. What have they to say to us?

J. G.





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## THE PERFECT MYSTERY

**T**HAT banal expression "it's a perfect mystery to me" takes on fresh meaning and intrigue in the story of Isadore Fink. The very poverty of the life of that little, lone and obscure Harlem laundryman help to make his case the perfect mystery; simple enough to make us feel that we command a knowledge of all the factors in his story; yet we are left baffled as to how to write his last chapter other than that he is dead. Like the police who worked on the case, we are intrigued to the point of irritation that anything so simple should so elude us; until at the end we abandon the hunt, as the police have done, with an uncomfortable sense of that chill that comes up from the abysses of the unknown.

Isadore Fink was born in a small town in Galicia about thirty years ago of poor Jewish parents, his father a pedler of drygoods and, although there were no other children, Isadore's mother was compelled to take in washing to help feed the little family. The boy got no schooling as he had to spend most

of his working hours helping his mother. She died when he was seven; and the boy had to do all the housework until three years later when his father, too, died. Thereafter Isadore lived with whatever family was willing to board him in return for a full day's housework. He was best at washing clothes, so that was most of the work he was given to do.

In adolescence there awoke in him the dream of America. He began to do washing for neighbors until by dint of a life in which there was nothing but the washing of clothes he managed to accumulate by the time he was seventeen almost enough money to pay his steerage passage to New York. The Great War caught and held him for a year; but he was so slight of body and health that his service was practically that of a noncombatant. Nevertheless the war left him with shaken nerves.

There, however, still intact was that passage money. For another year or two—such was the power of his one dream—he managed to glean enough additional earnings out of his war-impooverished home village to achieve his immigration to New York.

Here he got a job as a laundry helper on the lower east side and worked an average of sixteen hours a day. Ten years of this rewarded him with a saved-up capital of nearly a thousand dollars with which he could realize his next dream, a little laundry of his own.

In those ten years Isadore made few friends,

much as he hungered for human relation in his life; simply he had neither the time nor the personality wherewith to cultivate intimacies. Neither, however, had he enemies. Just as even the Great War had passed him over as a noncombatant, so the war of labor racketeering that so often rages in the laundry industry in New York left him unmolested as too insignificant a figure for anyone to bother with.

A little over a year ago he launched on the second voyage of adventure of his life by opening his own laundry at 52 East One Hundred and Thirty-second Street. This is a tenement house in colored Harlem, and all he could afford was a front room on the ground floor. The two rooms that were ordinarily rented with the store he gave up to an old colored woman who lived alone there and paid him a meagre rent. She was so old that we can eliminate her at once as an interesting factor in the mystery that was to overtake Isadore Fink.

Another thing that literally barred her from any important part in Fink's story was a stout iron bolt which he put on the door between his store and her two rooms.

It was not any feeling against her personally that made him bolt the door; it was fear he felt. It is one of the ironies in meagre lives that the less there is to lose the greater is the fear of losing it. To make ends meet he had to work alone until late each night. The few neighbors and customers with whom Isadore

Fink ventured to exchange anything more than matter-of-fact talk knew that he was haunted by the fear that some night his single-room home-and-workshop would be broken into and robbed.

This fear prompted him to protect every possible entrance into his shop. In the rear there was a window opening into a narrow court. This window he kept continuously locked; and on the inside he put up strong bars so close together that even a cat would find difficulty getting through between them.

His main concern was the street door, the only remaining entrance into the place. Over it was a narrow glass transom hardly large enough, were it open, to let a child through. This transom Fink secured firmly by nailing it all around.

The street door itself had already two complicated locks when Fink moved in. He added such another bolt on the inside as was on the door between his shop and the home of the old colored woman.

One wintry night last February, Fink made up a package of fresh laundry to deliver to a customer, put on his hat and coat and, leaving the store, carefully locked the front door. By the time he got back to his home block it was almost ten. He had worked hard that day, unremittingly, and the thought of going back to his lonely shop to resume his drudgery that night prompted him to take a little respite.

He stepped into a small cigar store across the street from his shop, bought some cigarettes and

loitered for a chat with the clerk. Fink seemed to feel in ordinary spirits that night, tired but not noticeably depressed or worried. After a quarter of an hour of commonplace talk he went back to his shop.

The clerk, looking out, saw him cross the street, unlock his front door, lock himself in and pull down the shades on his door and the street window. A few minutes later the cigar clerk decided that Fink must have changed his mind about working any more that night, for he saw the light in his store go out. That was about half-past ten.

It must have been a few minutes later that the old colored woman who lived in back of Fink's store was shocked out of her sleep by hearing three revolver shots in rapid succession in Fink's store. Then she heard what was unmistakably the fall of his body to the floor. Silence followed.

In panic the old woman threw her wrapper over her and ran out into the tenement hall. Opening the street door she yelled, "Police!"

The colored policeman on the beat happened to be near enough to hear her and came running.

"What's the matter, granny?" he asked.

She stammered out what she had heard.

The policeman tried the front door to Fink's store and found it locked. "Any other way to get in there?" he asked the old woman.



"Dey's a door between his shop an' mah bedroom, but it's bolted on his side," she told the policeman.

He ran into her rooms and found the door to Fink's shop as little promising to break through as the front door, so he hurried out into the street. A small crowd was gathering, several boys among them.

"Here, one of you kids, help me," he called to the boys. "I'll give you a lift up to the transom. See if you can get in and open the door for me from the inside."

He had some difficulty in getting a boy small enough in body and stout enough in spirit to volunteer for the job. A tough little colored newsboy climbed up with the policeman's help and tried to open the transom over the door. It resisted the banging of his fists and elbows. The policeman reached up his club and the youngster, taking it, smashed away the glass pane.

Then squeezing through the transom frame the boy dropped into the dark store. The policeman could hear him feeling for the locks and the bolt as quickly as he could find them; and in less than a minute the boy had the door open and scuttled out into the street. He didn't know what was in that dark room but did not care to stay alone there even long enough to glance behind.

The policeman went into the store, groped about for the lights and turned them on.

On the floor near the back of his shop lay Fink, blood still slowly coming out of two bullet wounds in his head and one in his hand. The policeman knelt and put his hand over Fink's heart. The body was still warm but life was gone.

The policeman looked up at the frightened faces pressing in about the doorway.

"He's bumped himself off," he announced. "Somebody go 'phone the station." There was no telephone in the laundry.

While several excited volunteers notified the East One Hundred and Twenty-sixth Street police station the patrolman in the shop glanced about for the revolver that had caused the death.

His casual first glance showed no revolver in sight. The policeman looked under the body. Then he looked further; under the nearby furniture; behind the hanging that separated the shop from Fink's improvised bedroom; then in every nook and corner of the laundry.

A sergeant arrived with two detectives. They had already heard from a score of excited messengers and bystanders the policeman's simple verdict of the tragedy.

"Where's the gun, Pete?" the sergeant asked the policeman.

The other was standing in the middle of the

shop, his coat and hat off, the knees of his trousers dusty, a sheepish look on his face.

"Sarge," he said apologetically, "I've gone over this place on all fours twice over. Maybe I'm blind, Sarge, or dumb, or something. Because I haven't been able to find the gun."

"All right, boys," the sergeant said to the detectives with him. "Let's hunt for the gun. It just can't be far away."

The four trained policemen ransacked Isadore Fink's one-room home for half an hour. By that time the coroner had arrived.

"I should judge he did it with a .38," the coroner said. "Let's look at the gun."

The four officers of the metropolitan police looked uncomfortable.

"Believe it or not, doctor," said the sergeant, "but the four of us have been over this place for half an hour with a fine-toothed comb, and we can't find any sign of a gun."

"That's funny," the coroner said. "But let's take another look at the body. Is this the way you found it, officer?" he asked Officer Pete.

"Yes, sir."

The coroner examined the revolver wounds for powder and other indications of the spot from which the shots had been fired. His conclusions were that the shooting took place about two feet from the

body and at about the levels of the three wounds.

"Gentlemen," he announced to the police, "from the looks of the wounds I am forced to decide that this man could not have held the revolver that killed him."

"And," a detective said, "since we haven't been able to find the gun that did it, it looks as if someone had taken it away."

"Impossible!" objected Officer Pete. "The kid I hoisted through the transom scooted out of the store the moment he got the door open but he hasn't been out of my sight since. And as soon as I saw there was no gun in sight I searched him."

The youngster was there, anxiously bearing out what the policeman said. "What do Ah wan' wiv a daid man's gun?" he protested.

We may eliminate him, as the police did, from any share in the mystery, which by now resolved into a hunt for a possible murderer of the inoffensive little laundryman.

The door to the colored woman's rooms was examined minutely. The bolt on the laundry side of the door was rusted fast in its place. An old spider-web spanned the crack between the lintel and the top of the door.

The window opening on the court was locked on the catch, on the inside, of course. Dust had caked about the sash grooves showing that the window had

not been opened for weeks at least. Every one of the closely spaced bars over it was in place.

The transom, as we have seen, had had to be smashed in and the sash was found nailed in as Fink had seen to it when he first moved in.

Officer Pete, the small boy he had hoisted through the transom and several of the first-comers of the crowd on the street all testified to the fact that the front door had been locked on the inside. And, as I have pointed out, there was no other window, door or opening into the place larger than a two inch rat-hole in one corner of the room.

For twenty-four hours a corps of detectives went over every inch of the one-room laundry for signs of a revolver, for trap-doors or secret panels.

The most expert finger-print men in New York's Police Department worked on the place and aside from the prints left by the first of the searching party the only finger-prints found were those of Fink himself.

For over a month a bewildered squad of picked sleuths from Headquarters worked on the mystery of Isadore Fink's death. At first they worked with zest; then irritably; finally in complete bewilderment.

At the time of this writing, about a year after Isadore Fink passed into the unexplored bourne beyond life, the police know no more of the manner of his passing than they did when Policeman Pete

first entered his dark store. And here we are compelled to leave the mystery with perhaps some such comment as one of the detectives on the case made.

“That damn two-for-a-cent Yid mystery,” he said, “gives me the creeps!”

## II

### SCOTLAND YARD'S LATEST

**S**OME people seem to attract the torments of life because they are weak, some because they are strong, and some apparently because they meet life's bullying with a puzzled patient dignity which must enrage a tyrant; at least that was how Vivian Messiter met it. He was born and educated in England but went to America soon after graduation, attracted by what he thought would be a wider choice there of career and fortunes.

He had sensitiveness but with him it seemed to be anything but an asset. He had practical intelligence but it never brought him success. He tried ranching in New Mexico, business in Denver and constructional engineering in New York, without much satisfaction. Meanwhile he married but even that failed and ended in divorce. He had a daughter who filled his need for some strong warm human relation; but she was killed in an automobile accident.

The Great War came and Messiter enlisted

eagerly in the Canadian infantry, hoping for self-forgetting one way or another. But early in the war he was shot through both hips. That left him neither a cripple, which might have afforded him a measure of release from further striving, nor was he wholly cured but had to walk with a cane.

At the age of fifty-seven he found himself back in England, in Southampton, agent in that city for the Wolf Head Oil Company. He had a depot where the oil consigned to him was kept; and connected with it was a small garage for his delivery automobile. Here he spent his forenoons and early afternoons meeting whatever customers came.

After work he went to his lodging, a single small furnished room in a boarding house in Carlton Road. It was here that he attended to his business correspondence.

Mrs. Parott, who kept the boarding house respected him and felt sorry for him. If ever a man lived alone it was Messiter. Not a soul came to see him; nor did Messiter ever visit anyone outside of business. Letters, obviously not of a business nature, came often from America; always in the same handwriting. Except for this, Messiter seemed as much alone in the world as if he were one of life's orphans.

He never went out for amusement, but spent his evenings alone in his rooms, smoking countless cigarettes and reading. This went on till late in October, 1928.



Then one morning Mrs. Parott went into his room to make up his bed and found that it had not been slept in. She did not remember his coming back to the house the day before; so she looked for the usual tell-tale cigarette butts with which his ashtray was usually piled by morning. The ashtray was as clean as Mrs. Parott had left it the morning before.

Mrs. Parott wondered at her lodger's departure from his routine but gave the matter little thought until the third morning came without a sign of Messiter. Then she began to wonder and to worry. A considerate lodger like Mr. Messiter would have let her know if he meant to stay away from the house for a number of days.

Mrs. Parott talked it over with her husband and was going to notify the police. But with masculine logic Mr. Parott pointed out that Mr. Messiter's rent was paid up; that a single gentleman is entitled to go off on a trip without explanation; and that if their lodger should happen to be indulging in a quiet spree he would be justifiably angered if Mrs. Parott had meanwhile notified the police.

For a few days Mrs. Parott let herself be dissuaded; then she put on her shawl and without consulting her husband went to the police station and told her fears. The police went to Mr. Messiter's garage to investigate.

They found it padlocked and apparently by

Mr. Messiter; for the lock was one of those that do not spring shut on pressure but have to be locked with a key. The police too were inclined to think Mrs. Parott's fears more feminine than logical; they refused to break the garage door open; and advised Mrs. Parott not to worry about her lodger.

Meanwhile the home office of the Wolf Head Oil Company also wondered what had happened to Messiter that he so suddenly stopped writing them and in no other way kept in touch. They wrote him; then telegraphed. The mail accumulated in the letter box in the garage door; the telegrams came back as undeliverable. Finally the oil company decided to consider Messiter's post vacated. A representative was sent in his place, with authority to break into the garage and take possession.

The agent came to Southampton, found the garage locked and with the aid of a crowbar broke into the place.

In the garage, by the side of the delivery truck, lay the body of Vivian Messiter, many days dead. Blood was spattered on the nearest wall and there had been a pool of it about his head where it had fallen on the floor.

The skull was battered in, one blow struck from behind, another on the forehead.

The Southampton police looked for some weapon that might be the one which had dealt the

blows on that shattered skull. After much searching of the premises they found behind one of the oil drums a hammer with a peculiar nose. Also it had dried blood on it; a human hair; but no fingerprints. The hair matched Messiter's.

They looked for other clues in the garage but found none. They searched the dead man's clothes. There was no money in his pockets.

They opened a gold locket, a small much rubbed trinket he carried in a secret pocket. In it was a snapshot of a woman in a nurse's uniform.

The police then searched the dead man's furnished room.

They found a large number of letters, all in the same handwriting. There was not a place mentioned, not a date, not a single clue that would lead to some address. And not one of the letters was signed. Only Mrs. Parott's recollection that all the stamps on the envelopes, as they arrived at her house, were Canadian gave the Southampton police any indication as to where the letters had been mailed.

The contents of the letters revealed much but helped the police little. The writer was in love with Messiter and was obviously loved by him. But even in their love letters the two must have used a sort of code; some of the passages, those which approached nearest an abandonment to emotion, were meaningless without the key to their code. It was as if both Messiter and the writer of the letters dared not let

themselves go even in the privacy of their love letters; as if they were afraid of themselves or of some malicious fate that would one day open the door to the hiding place of their love.

The code was worked out by some expert in the Southampton police but it brought them no nearer the identity of the writer. It only let the police read more fully the heart of Messiter.

And even as the police were working on the case another communication came, a cable; a frantic inquiry, unsigned, as to the meaning of the long silence on the part of Messiter. Part of the cable was in the code used in the love letters.

Messiter's former wife, his brothers and sisters were found in different parts of England. They had not heard from Vivian Messiter for many months; nor had they a single clue to offer, eager though they were to help run down the murderer.

Which brought the Southampton police face to face with defeat in the Messiter case.

In the circumstances they called upon Scotland Yard to take charge of the case. Lord Byng had just been appointed head of the famous organization and it was the first substantial challenge to Scotland Yard under him to show what it could do where other police had failed.

To Southampton came a squad of Scotland Yard men.

The fiction version of what has made Scotland

Yard celebrated would indicate that it possesses some diabolical cleverness in dealing with criminals and their works; a more true conception would ascribe much of the success of Scotland Yard to an infinite capacity for taking pains.

The Scotland Yard people went over the same ground as the Southampton police. One squad went to work on the hammer with which the deathblow had undoubtedly been dealt. Every hardware store in Southampton, every manufacturer of hammers was visited and questioned. In this way Scotland Yard plodded on till one day they found the factory that had made the hammer; then the store that had sold it. Then the district about that store was canvassed, until one day a man was found who said, "Yes, this hammer belongs to me."

He was a mechanic in a local automobile factory but had kept the hammer at his home in a working class neighborhood in Southampton. He told of being home one Sunday when, looking out of a window, he saw that a small delivery automobile was standing in front of his house. The chauffeur was tinkering with the engine. The mechanic came down and asked if he could be of assistance.

"Yes," the stranger told him, "you might lend me a hammer for a few moments, I left mine in my garage."

The mechanic went indoors and came out with the hammer. The chauffeur of the delivery truck

seemed intelligent about motor trucks, for he got the engine to work in short order. Then he climbed into his seat to test it out and drove off without troubling to return the borrowed hammer.

Did the mechanic, the detective asked, remember what the ungrateful stranger looked like?

Sheepishly the mechanic said, no, he did not note the stranger's face. The detectives investigated the mechanic and became convinced that he knew no more of the murder than he had told.

Meanwhile another squad searched the premises of the murder. Behind a drum of oil they found a crumpled piece of oil-stained paper, on it a notation in pencil. "Gar—Saty—10 am, or—12.30." It was obviously a note of an appointment at the garage for some Saturday; and it was on a Saturday that Messiter had been murdered.

The handwriting was not Messiter's.

The detectives from London then went through the waste basket of the garage office and searched and sifted other litter about the place. From these they selected as interesting several bits of paper which would have been passed by as worthless by other investigators. One was a screwed up fragment of a note bearing only the signature, "Thomas". The other was also part of some memorandum, its contents missing, leaving only the signature "W. F. Thomas".

There was nothing about these signatures to

indicate that they were clues but Scotland Yard made note of them nevertheless.

At the same time the detectives examined Messiter's business books. Exhaustive investigation of the recorded entries yielded nothing. But the Scotland Yard men found also a receipt book, blank but showing that nine pages had been torn out. On the tenth page, however, they found the faintest possible indication that something had been written on the page on top of it; the pressure of the writing had left its mark on the blank page beneath.

With the aid of powerful lenses and a special process used in the laboratories of Scotland Yard on such clues, these indentations were finally read and photographed. What had been written on the ninth page of the receipt book was an acknowledgment of the payment of two shillings and sixpence as commission for the sale of five gallons of oil to "Cromer and Bartlett, Bold Street, Southampton".

The handwriting on this receipt, as judged by a capital F, was the same as on the two signatures of "Thomas" found in the waste basket and in the garage litter.

Scotland Yard drew a complete blank when they tried to find "Cromer and Bartlett, Bold Street, Southampton". There is no such street in Southampton; and a nation-wide search by Scotland Yard failed to find any firm by the name of "Cromer and Bartlett".

From this Scotland Yard concluded that a salesman, perhaps "W. F. Thomas," had been working for Messiter; that the salesman had collected at least one commission payment for a sale he had never made; that the entry for this "sale" had been torn out; and the likelihood was that on the other nine pages torn out were similarly fake sales recorded, indicating that other unearned commissions had been paid by Messiter, probably to Thomas.

Messiter's garage was in such a quiet neighborhood and he had lived so isolated an existence that no one knew whether anyone was in his employ at the time of his death. So with "W. F. Thomas" as their only clue Scotland Yard squads started out on a house-to-house canvass of Southampton.

Eventually the Scotland Yard men found a Mrs. Horne. She kept a cheap boarding house in Cranbury Avenue in Southampton, and remembered that about the time of Messiter's murder there was a roomer in her house by the name of Thomas. Living with him was a blonde by the name of Lily, supposed to be his wife.

This Thomas was a stocky smooth-shaven man with a scar on his jaw.

He arrived with Lily on October 20, some ten days before Messiter's death. He told Mrs. Horne nothing of his business. The arrangement between Thomas and Mrs. Horne was that he would pay the rent for his room weekly. Mrs. Horne's account book



showed that on October 27 a week's rent was due from Thomas but that he did not pay it till the afternoon of October 30, which was the day of the murder. Three days later "Thomas and wife" moved away. "W. F. Thomas" left a forwarding address for mail, "27 Chiswick Road, Birmingham".

Although Scotland Yard sent a detective to that address it did not surprise them to find that no such address existed.

Another squad of Yard men had meanwhile found that a building contractor by the name of Mitchel in Downton also had reason to remember a man by the name of W. F. Thomas, who too had a scar on his jaw. A week or two before Messiter's death Mitchel had advertised for a chauffeur. This Thomas answered the advertisement. Mitchel chose him for the job, which however was not to commence before November 5.

Thomas asked to be taken on earlier as he had lost, he said, a wallet with all his money. Mitchel advanced him some money to help him out until he should begin earning.

On November 5 Thomas began working for Mitchel. Several weeks later he disappeared—with nearly one hundred and fifty pounds of Mitchel's money.

Scotland Yard took Mrs. Horne, Mitchel, the mechanic whose hammer had dealt the death blow to Messiter, and Bowes, a grocer who had a shop

near Messiter's garage, to look through Scotland Yard's extensive photograph gallery of rogues. Bowes, who said that he remembered seeing a stranger in Messiter's company on the day of the murder, was not sure whether he saw the stranger's photograph in the collection. The mechanic too would not swear that he recognized the face of the man who had borrowed his hammer and failed to return it.

But both Mrs. Horne and Mitchel were positive that in the photograph of William Henry Podmore in Scotland Yard's Rogue's Gallery they recognized "W. F. Thomas".

William Henry Podmore records showed that he was at that moment serving a six months' sentence in Wandsworth Prison for stealing money from a contractor near Salisbury. Scotland Yard men went to see Podmore.

He proved to be a chunky smooth-shaven man in the late twenties, with a scar on his jowled square jaw; he had heavy features, a sensual mouth and dark heavy-lidded eyes that did not match.

The police had no difficulty in finding a blonde by the name of Lily who was as interested in Podmore as he was in her.

Podmore's record as a criminal went back to his childhood when at the age of nine he tried a bit of burglary and was put on police probation for a year. Four years later for stealing a cash box he was sent

to a reformatory. Two years after that he resumed burglary and got three years for it. Then came other thefts and other prison terms.

Meanwhile he married but deserted his wife while she was pregnant. There followed a succession of mistresses; and at the time of the Messiter murder Podmore was, as has been said, living with his golden haired "Lil".

Podmore was taken back to Southampton and a coroner and jury tried him for the murder of Vivian Messiter. At first Podmore tried to deny that he had ever seen Messiter; then he had a change of mind and told his story.

Yes, he was "W. F. Thomas". Yes, he had answered an advertisement of Messiter's for a salesman of oil. Messiter wrote him to call at the garage for an interview. The interview was a satisfactory one and Podmore, under the name of Thomas, went to work for Messiter. On the day of the murder Messiter was to meet at his garage both Podmore and another applicant for the job of salesman for Messiter, a man by the name of "Maxton" or "Baxton"; Podmore said he was not exactly sure which. What he was sure of was that the other man was in the garage with Messiter when Podmore called; and that he was there after Podmore left.

At this interview, Podmore went on to say, Messiter gave him the name of "Cromer and Bartlett" as a possible customer. Podmore then, according to

his story, went away. When he came back late that afternoon the garage door was padlocked; several times on subsequent days he found it still locked. Whereupon, Podmore said, he decided to find work elsewhere. He denied that the entry in the receipt book which recorded a commission for selling oil to "Cromer and Bartlett" was written by him.

Scotland Yard found no one by the name of "Maxton" or "Baxton" who in the least bore out Podmore's story.

The evidence Scotland Yard had gathered against Podmore was presented to the coroner and his jury. At the conclusion the coroner pointed out to the jury that they had only circumstantial evidence whereon to convict Podmore of murder; that even grave suspicion would not justify a verdict of guilty. The jury must decide, the coroner charged, whether the evidence against Podmore was such that they would be willing to send him to the gallows on the weight of it.

The coroner's jury went out to deliberate. Twenty minutes later they came back to have the coroner clear up some points of law and again retired. Fifty minutes later they returned with their verdict:

"The death of Vivian Messiter was due to a fracture of the skull and the consequent injury to the brain inflicted by blows of a hammer. The murder was committed by a person or persons unknown."

Podmore walked out of the courtroom with a smile on his lips. His Lily joined him at the door for a brief greeting.

Then he was taken back to Wandsworth Prison to finish his six-months term for theft.

Scotland Yard thought it had gathered enough evidence to convince any jury but apparently it had missed its guess.

At the expiration of his term Podmore prepared to leave prison. As he stepped out of its gates he was arrested again by a Scotland Yard man for the murder of Vivian Messiter.

This time he was tried by the Assize Court in the Castle of Winchester. All the evidence that had been brought against Podmore at the coroner's hearing was brought out again. But this time it was reinforced by much careful work by Scotland Yard in the way of corroborating detail.

In addition there were three new witnesses against Podmore, fellow inmates of Wandsworth Prison. David Cummings testified that Podmore had talked to him freely of the murder of Messiter and had made little effort to hide his guilt. Joseph Deass, a colored man from Ceylon, told of a conversation with Podmore in which the murder was described in detail by Podmore. William Street also testified, partly against Podmore, partly for him.

During the trial Podmore had not slept or eaten. He was beginning to lose that poise of his

with which he had walked out of the coroner's courtroom.

Both sides had presented their cases. The jury went out. Podmore took hold of himself for the ordeal of waiting.

The jury returned.

The court clerk asked, "Gentlemen of the jury, are you agreed upon your verdict?"

"We are," replied the foreman.

Podmore stood up, gripped the bar before him.

"How say you?" the clerk continued. "Is William Henry Podmore guilty or not guilty?"

"Guilty!" the foreman replied.

A gasp of shocked tension sounded in the courtroom but it did not come from Podmore.

"William Henry Podmore, you have been convicted of the crime of wilful murder," the Clerk of the Assize went on. "Have you anything to say why the Court should not give you the sentence of death?"

Podmore replied in a voice harsh with the overtones of supreme effort,

"I still repeat that I know nothing whatever about it."

Everyone in the courtroom was asked to stand while the judge's clerk advanced with a square of black cloth and adjusted it on the wig of the Lord Chief Justice. Lord Hewart was obviously affected and kept his eyes on the papers in front of him as he said in a low but penetrating tone,

“William Henry Podmore, the jury have found you guilty of the crime of wilful murder and there is only one sentence known to the law for that. . . . You are to be hanged by the neck till you are dead and may the Lord have mercy on your soul!”

Podmore turned for a swift look to some one in the gallery of the court. Golden-haired Lily there had turned so white that those near thought she was about to faint. But Podmore could do nothing about it. He took his place between two men and was escorted to the death cell.

And in April he was hanged.

### III

## THE LOVING SON

**T**HE month of October, 1928, was well advanced and Margate, the English coast resort, was almost emptied of summer guests, when to the Metropole Hotel there came a young man and a white-haired elderly woman. They registered as Sydney Harry Fox and Rosalie Fox, his mother, and asked for a double room. The hotel clerk, noting that they had practically no luggage, ventured a polite inquiry asking only some formal assurance as to the newcomer's ability to pay what hotel bill they should incur.

Sydney Harry Fox felt no offense in the question.

"We are staying overnight only," he explained. "My mother is not very well and we are making our way by easy stages to Lyndhurst in the New Forest, where my mother has just bought a small estate. We have sent our luggage there."

The clerk found the explanation satisfactory, especially reassured by the young man's appearance,



manners and speech. Fox was slim, excellently tailored and groomed, and spoke in the accents of a gentleman. He was almost excessively goodlooking, with curling light brown hair, luminous deep-set *blue eyes, regular features and soft, dull, full shapely lips*. His hands were manicured and moved with grace. Altogether he seemed to be accustomed to comfort, perhaps luxury.

His mother was not quite as well dressed as he but her accents too seemed to stamp her as one accustomed to move among the more prosperous strata of society. There was a striking mother-and-son resemblance between the two newcomers and apparently more than ordinary attachment.

The son seemed devoted to an exceptional degree, anticipating his mother's least wish. She in turn followed his every movement, anxiously, dotingly.

On the day after their arrival the son came downstairs looking somewhat worried. He told the clerk that his mother was not feeling well, that she had slept poorly, partly because she was afraid of waking him if she moved. He also had slept poorly as he sensed his mother was awake. No, it was nothing serious, he assured the clerk; just one of those restless nights for both of them.

The clerk suggested that since there were so few guests in the hotel he could give the Foxes a suite of two rooms if they should decide to stay over;

it would be no dearer than the room they now had.

"That's an excellent idea," Fox replied. "Because for a day or two I shouldn't want Mother to travel."

*The clerk showed him a choice of suites. Fox selected Rooms 66 and 67. There was a fireplace in Room 66, which he wanted for his mother; the imitation log-fire in the hearth which burned illuminating gas would be a comfortable place for her to sit by on those chilly October evenings.*

Between the mother's room and his there was a communicating door; so that one could go from one room to the other without having to use the public corridor.

Mrs. Fox continued to ail, not seriously but seemingly enough to decide her son that they should stay on for a few days. Meanwhile he was making friends easily, with the guests as well as with the hotel staff, even with the shopkeepers in the neighborhood. He had a fund of good stories of the gay life in London. His stories were mostly personal experiences and bore the stamp of veracity. He named notables as his friends but made his hearers, no matter how humble in station, feel at ease with him; at the same time there was not the slightest air of condescension about him.

On the third day of their stay the son came down early in the morning, dressed for travel.

"I say, Mother is feeling better," he said to the

hotel clerk. "But I have to run down to London on some business. Will you be good enough occasionally to go up and see how Mother feels? I shall be back by evening. By the way, I am out of cash. Will you take my check for—say, two pounds; enough to get me to London where I shall get some money at the bank?"

The clerk was sorry, it was against the rules of the hotel to cash guests' checks; but he would be glad to see that Mrs. Fox was looked after while Mr. Fox was away. "And as for your check," the clerk continued, "I think the chemist down the street will cash it for you."

"Thank you so much," Fox said and left.

The chemist was among those whom Fox had charmed with his urbanity and did cash the check.

Fox came back late that afternoon and had dinner with his mother in their rooms. Later he came down alone and asked at the bar of the hotel,

"Have you any really good port? My mother would like a glass but it has to be excellent."

The hotel had some port but it was apparently not choice enough for Fox for he went out and bought a bottle at a wine shop and went upstairs again.

An hour later he sauntered down again.

"I left Mother sitting by her fire, feeling much better than before dinner," he told the hotel clerk. "She said she'll go to bed soon and told me to go

down and not worry about her but enjoy an hour or two with men-folk. So I kissed her good-night and came down."

He spent some time chatting and drinking with the guests in the sitting room. At about eleven o'clock he went upstairs again.

Ten minutes later the guests in the hotel were wakened by his shout,

"Fire!" He was running down the steps in his pajamas. "Help!" He seemed beside himself. "My mother! Help me save my mother!"

One of the guests, a travelling salesman by the name of Hopkins, rushed up to the Fox suite. The son's door, the only entrance into the suite from the corridor was closed and Hopkins wrenched it open. The room was partly full of smoke.

The door into Mrs. Fox's room was also closed. Hopkins tied a handkerchief over his mouth and opened the door into her room. It was so full of smoke that he could not see although the now open door from the corridor let in the light.

Hopkins groped to the bed and found Mrs. Fox apparently unconscious. Picking her up in his arms he made his way out of the room.

Meanwhile some of the other guests and the hotel staff had rushed upstairs with buckets of water. They made short work of the fire which was confined to Mrs. Fox's room. It looked as if the gas fire on the hearth had ignited some newspapers or some of

the armchair stuffing that had come out of the seat; for it was around the chair that most of the fire damage to the room was confined.

A doctor was called. He found Mrs. Fox not only unconscious but with no heart action perceptible. Artificial respiration was applied, on the theory that she had been rendered unconscious by the smoke and fumes of the fire.

All this time Fox was almost in need of medical attention himself so hysterical he seemed over his mother.

Finally the doctor announced that there was no longer room for hope for Mrs. Fox. She was dead.

The following day an inquest was held. Fox had recovered sufficiently to be coherent as he testified. He came up to his room, he said, listened at the closed door between his room and his mother's; decided she was asleep; and went to bed. Just as he was falling asleep he saw smoke issuing from his mother's room.

He was so terrified by the sight, he said, that he lost his head completely and rushed downstairs shouting for help. That was all he knew of the fire and its cause.

As there was nothing to contradict his statements and no suspicious circumstances in connection with the fire, the coroner's verdict was,

"Death from misadventure."

Fox was so prostrated that everyone felt sorry

for him. When he had rested a little, however, he set about the funeral arrangements.

In accordance with his instructions his mother's body was taken to Great Fransham in Norfolk, where she had given birth to her son. There she was buried in the village churchyard.

Fox left Margate, asking that all bills be sent on to him.

Meanwhile one of the big London insurance companies was notified by Fox that there was a policy in force on his mother's life, which he asked them to pay as promptly as possible. It was for three thousand pounds.

The claim went into the machinery of routine for settlement and a clerk examined the policy in a routine way. Suddenly however he exclaimed,

“I say, what a—coincidence!”

He took his discovery to a superior, who also examined the policy, in anything but a routine way.

It was seen that originally the policy would have expired twenty-two hours before Mrs. Fox's death at Margate. But a few hours before the expiration of the policy Fox had renewed it.

There was a hurried consultation of officials of the insurance company.

“But, good God,” one of them exclaimed, “a man doesn't burn his mother alive just to collect a few thousand pounds! He would have to be one of the monsters of all history to do that. I grant it looks

shady he should have renewed the policy just a few hours before his mother's death. But that very fact should show how much of a mere coincidence the whole thing is. No man in his senses, no matter how monstrous his character, would be fool enough to kill his mother almost the moment in which he had insured her in his own interest. . . ."

Nevertheless the insurance company sent a man down to Margate for a bit of quiet investigation.

Of Mrs. Fox's death the investigator learned no more than the coroner's verdict told him.

But he learned much to interest him about the son. The first thing he found out about Sydney Harry Fox was that the "small estate" he said his mother bought in Lyndhurst, in New Forest, did not exist.

The chemist who had cashed Fox's check for two pounds contributed information on Fox. The check had come back as worthless.

Then the investigator began to hear about other hotels and tradesmen victimized by Fox and his checks. It was clear now why the Foxes had traveled without baggage.

The investigator sent a wire to the insurance company,

"Extremely muddy water in this business."

The insurance company handed the matter over to Scotland Yard.

Scotland Yard got to work. Fox was found in

London and arrested on the charge of passing bogus checks.

Then the Yard got to work on a history of Sydney Harry Fox and found plenty in it to interest them.

He was born in Great Fransham several years after his mother's husband, a railroad signalman, had deserted her. Educated in the village school, Sydney was an excellent scholar, and an especially good penman; a skill he exploited in later life.

While still a pupil in the village school Sydney got an idea for making money easily. He stole a collection box from a charity organization and went about in the neighborhood collecting funds in the name of sweet charity. He looked a cherub with his curling locks, his wide blue eyes, the Cupid's bow lips; and he had a gift for seductive talk. Many people believed his story and dropped money in Sydney's charity box. It came out finally that Sydney's collection went into his own pocket. Sydney was too young for a reformatory, so the sentence executed on him was a good whipping.

A wealthy titled Englishman and his wife, visitors to Great Fransham a few years later, saw a village lad of fourteen of striking good looks. When they stopped to talk to him they were impressed by the excellence of his speech, his poise, his intelligence and his smile. They decided that he would look well in the livery of their service in their great



house in Manchester Square, London. They broached the matter to Sydney's mother and to Sydney. The mother was willing to let her son go to London, the boy was thrilled.

Years later Sydney wrote an account of his life.\* Excerpts from it should help an understanding of his character.

"My initial trip to London was like a fairy story. Even now I recall how awed I was when I got out into the whirl of traffic to make my way to Manchester Square. It was during my service with those kindly gentle people that I grew familiar with luxury. My duty was mainly to look after Sir John, and I found myself in the greatest comfort, and glimpsing a life of which I had only read and dreamed. In leisure hours I wandered into the streets of West End, staring into the great shops and at the beautifully dressed women who patronized them. The dance places, the theatres, and the music halls fascinated me. I wanted to see them all—I, a country bumpkin from Great Fransham!"

A year or two later his employer died. The Great War broke out. Everyone developed fast in those hectic days; few developed as fast, however—if "development" is the word—as young Sydney. He got a clerkship in the Army and Navy stores; then with Cox and Company, the army bankers.

\* "News of the World."

"After that," says his autobiography, "in December, 1916, I joined the Army."

It omits the reason why he joined the Army. He had to make a choice between the army or prison for several bits of forgery.

"It was the sight of the young officers," his account goes on, "dashing in and out in a uniform, around which there was so much glamour, that decided me. All of them had some tale to tell me of the good times they were having, and their adventures, amorous or amusing on the night before. The haphazard way in which they flung their cheques about, even though a lot of them may have come back worthless helped me realize . . . how easy it seemed to pass a cheque, no matter if it was made out on a sheet of writing paper or a piece of sugar wrapping. . . . These boys on leave filled every minute with gaiety and gave me the fever badly. . . ."

While still with his regiment near London he met a Colonel in another service.

"For some reason," Fox's diary goes on, "the Colonel took a great liking to me. He took me to places that I had never been to before. . . . He introduced me to a number of titled and other people whose names are well known to the general public. . . . I got my first glimpse behind the scenes of theatrical life. . . . In turn I was introduced to a number of beautiful actresses and I cultivated expensive tastes. It was nothing for me to entertain one

or the other of our younger stage stars in those days and I was at gay parties with some of the most beautiful women in the profession. I was seeing life at its fullest. . . .”

While Sydney was thus “seeing life at its fullest” his mother was cooking and doing housework for families in and around London.

He was meanwhile assigned to a military hospital, among his duties being the delivery of mail to the patients. “One day,” continues his story, “there came a letter to an officer containing a cheque book. The envelope had been torn in transit and I could see what its contents were. There was a sudden temptation. I was leaving the hospital in a few days—and I had never had a cheque book in my life.”

Fox used the cheque book.

“I became the Hon. Sydney Fox. I flaunted myself around the West End and stayed at the Ritz and the Savoy. It was a hectic, glorious time. . . . There are ‘good-time girls’ and I turned out to be one of the ‘good-time men’ . . . .”

Fox’s good time came to temporary halt when a Detective Inspector of Scotland Yard arrested him for forgery. Three months in jail followed.

When he came out of jail a military escort met him at the gates and took him back to his regiment. One day, however, he threw what he described in his story as “an epileptic fit” and was discharged thereafter from military duty.

He went to live with his mother who was working now for the Red Cross.

"It was about this time," continues his story, "that my mother met . . . and became great friends with Lady Paget who, by some extraordinary coincidence, died in an almost similar fashion as my mother, from a fire that broke out in her bedroom. . . ."

With his excellent appearance, intelligence and his penmanship he managed to get a clerkship with Grindley's Bank in Parliament Street, London. For a while his taste of jail seemed to have cured him of his appetite for good times beyond his means; but not for long. Some of his old cronies found him and off he went again on more hectic times than ever before.

"The War was over, you must remember, and London was steeped in the aftermath of pleasure seeking. . . . Night clubs and questionable resorts had sprung up on every hand and there was plenty doing . . ." he wrote.

To pay for at least part of the "doings" Fox forged a check on the bank for which he was working and eventually realized on it another term in prison, this time eight months.

When he came out this time he did not find it so easy to get a job.

So he tried some more check passing and got another term in prison.

With three jail terms to his record it says something of Fox's wiles, the fact that he was able to get another clerkship, this time with an insurance company.

Soon after this he met Mrs. Morse, wife of Captain Alfred Graham Morse, an officer in the merchant marine, serving in the Orient. Mrs. Morse, a wealthy Australian, came to England to place her two children in school.

Fox improved his acquaintance with Mrs. Morse so rapidly that soon he and his mother were established in Mrs. Morse's home, in Southsea, London. Conveniently for Fox his mother often stayed away from the apartment.

Mrs. Morse was considerably older than Fox but he paid such ardent court to her that soon she was at his mercy. He got her to take out an insurance policy on her life for three thousand pounds made out to him as beneficiary. In order to make the thing look respectable Fox also induced her to make out a will in which she stated that she owed Fox five thousand pounds and that the insurance money was to be part payment of the debt, the rest to come out of her estate.

One night while Mrs. Fox was away Mrs. Morse went to bed somewhat earlier. She fell asleep after drinking some wine Fox had brought her. She awoke to find herself dizzy and semi-conscious. In a few

moments she traced the cause. There was an overpowering smell of illuminating gas in the room.

She cried out and Fox came running in, full of concern. The gas was quickly turned off and Fox asked Mrs. Morse how such a "terrible accident," as he described it, could have happened.

Mrs. Morse had no explanation to offer; and it is clear now that at the time she not only had no suspicion of Fox in connection with the "accident" but also not the least idea of Fox's real character nor of his police record.

Several weeks later, however, she found out something of his past and tore up her will, canceled her insurance policy and severed all relations with him.

All these things Scotland Yard found out while Fox was under arrest for passing fraudulent checks. On the strength of the history which Scotland Yard pieced together Fox was arrested now on the charge of murdering his mother.

He was placed on trial at the Assize Court in Sussex.

It would have to be a case of circumstantial evidence and perhaps nowhere so much as in England is it so hard to convict on such evidence a man or woman accused of murder.

The body of Mrs. Fox was exhumed and a post-mortem examination was made. Some of the leading medical experts in the country testified for the prose-

cution, some for the defense. The question the medical men were called upon to tell the jury was, how did Mrs. Fox come to die?

The experts on both sides agreed that if Fox had strangled her with his hands some of the delicate cartilages in the neck would have been broken; there were no ruptures in the neck of the corpse. The defense made much of this circumstance.

On the other hand the prosecution emphasized the fact that neither did the medical experts find any trace of soot in the air passages of the corpse, as there would have been had Mrs. Fox come to her death by suffocation from the smoke and fumes of the fire.

The prosecution advanced the theory that Fox had started the fire—after his mother was asleep from the port he had given her to drink. Then he stifled her with a pillow.

But with medical authorities signally disagreeing, theories were only theories; and the prosecution was asking the jury to send a man to the gallows on the strength of theories and circumstantial evidence.

Then authorities on fires were brought in and experiments were made before the jury's eyes to prove how the fire could or could not have been caused by the gas-log on the hearth. Horse hair, such as filled the chair in which Mrs. Fox sat before the hearth, was burned in court, packed tightly as

well as held loose in the air. Other experiments were tried to determine if the carpet on the floor of Mrs. Fox's room would have shown the fire damages it did if the whole thing did happen by accident. On all these tests experts differed.

What the jury had to depend upon most in their life-and-death deliberation was the character of Fox and his attitude toward his mother. Scores of witnesses were called by the defense. They all testified that Fox had never shown or expressed anything but devotion to his mother.

The prosecution could not contradict the testimony of these witnesses. The most it could suggest was that it did not require hatred of his mother to prompt Fox to burn her alive. There was the three thousand pounds of insurance he would collect at her death.

It was Fox's past therefore that played the important rôle in the jury's deliberations, not the circumstances under which the supposed murder took place.

The jury came into the courtroom with its verdict. Fox had seen the havoc to the prosecution caused by the clash of medical opinion at the trial. He had followed with eagerness the testimony of witnesses that he was always "good to his mother." Now he rose to receive the verdict.

He heard it. His blue eyes bulged and perspiration broke out on his forehead. His sensual lips



twitched and turned gray. He was on the point of collapse. There was a tremor in his voice as he faltered.

“I never murdered Mother, my lord! I am innocent!”

Nevertheless he was hanged.

#### IV

### THE YOUTH WITH SMILING EYES

**R** OGER VORON would have puzzled the wisest student of the human face, so little did he suggest the possibilities of his life story; certainly he puzzled the French peasants in the Loire village where he was raised. His mother, a hard-working country school teacher, was of good sound peasant stock, yet the boy seemed to have loafing in his very veins. Powerfully built he was physically indolent, until it came to wrestling in play; then he excelled. He had a serious, gentle, good-looking face; yet those who knew him best felt uneasy about him; why, they could not tell, unless it was his stubborn loafing.

It was his eyes, clear, blue and calm that troubled people most; at least when he smiled. Then he had a look as if there were too much sun in his eyes; or was it more the look of a tiger half-asleep? But even those whom he reminded of a drowsy tiger admitted that at least it was a tiger who had not yet tasted blood. For, except for his refusal to help his

widowed mother make a living, there appeared nothing objectionable in his character; his proneness to boast of his wrestling was understandable in a lad who had nothing else to boast about.

Nevertheless when he turned twenty-four and was still a loafer his mother lost all patience with him.

"You are a reproach to me," she told him. "How can I expect my pupils to believe me that one should be industrious and useful, when my own son is an idler? If you will not help me neither shall you any longer remain here to be a burden on me and a bad example to our youth!"

When Madame Voron said anything people believed her; and Roger, who at first did not think it possible that his mother really meant to throw him out of the house, found out otherwise.

He went to his grandmother, who lived alone in a house near his mother's. When Roger wished, he could be an ingratiating young man and he tried his sunny smile on the old woman, who was reputed to have quite a bit of money hidden away in her home. But his grandmother was as outraged at his loafing as her daughter; and bluntly told Roger to shift for himself.

Roger decided then that since he could no longer loaf in his home village he would try life in Paris. He made his way, partly on foot, partly by stealing rides.

In Paris, however, he found the lot of a penni-

less loafer no easier than at home; less so. He learned how it feels to go hungry and he did not like it.

One sunny afternoon he was brooding on a bench on Boulevard St. Michel when a faded little old woman came along and sat down near him. She looked the picture of poverty and Roger gave her only a glance and resumed his unpleasant thoughts.

The old woman proved a sociable soul and wanted to know Roger. She asked him what his trade was.

"A plasterer," he said; and added sarcastically, "you haven't by any chance some work for me on one of your numerous properties?"

She blushed at the sneer; then a defiant little expression came into her somewhat foolish face.

"I suppose you think me a pauper!" she retorted. "Just because you see me in poor clothes!"

Roger had turned his back on her and on her pathetic attempt to interest him.

"Well, you're wrong if you think so!" the old woman pursued, with spite in her voice. "I could hire you for a month and keep you busy if I wanted to. I have money, I have! I don't have to work. And if I look poor it is because I have better sense than to squander my money on clothes!"

She went on boasting of her money apparently without being heard; for Roger kept his back to her. Finally, however, he turned. His clear blue eyes had a look of apology in them.

"You must forgive the rudeness of a man who hasn't slept under a roof for ten nights; and you know some of the nights this week have not been too warm," he said.

The old woman was touched to the heart. "You poor boy!" she exclaimed. "I wish I could do something for you!"

"You can," he said slowly. "You can let me sleep on the floor somewhere in your house. I'll be a watchdog for you."

She was in greater distress than ever. "My home is only a garret in rue Aubry-le-Boucher." Then remembering that she was supposed to be well-to-do, she added hastily, "Expensive quarters I find as much of a waste as clothes. But if you are willing to put up with what modest home I have perhaps I can give you shelter for a few days—until you find work."

"Yes, yes," Roger said eagerly. "Anything better than the cold stones in the Big Markets!"

So Roger went home with Madame Villet. It was indeed a modest home, a little garret as poor in looks as her clothes. In her bedroom, however, Roger saw a closed cupboard of oak.

"And in that cupboard, I suppose," he smiled friendlily, "is your treasure?"

Madame Villet grew confused and a little frightened.

"Why, no—that is, I'd rather not discuss that," she stammered.

Then she became more frightened. For the young man's smiling eyes narrowed until she could not tell whether he was still smiling friendly—or how?

And he advanced slowly, still with that expression about his eyes. She retreated before him and tried to leave the room but he got between her and the door. She called to him to go away; then she called for help. Her voice was not very strong and the walls of the old tenement were thick.

Then Roger Voron caught her. Throwing her to the bed he pressed his strong fingers about the old woman's throat until she stopped struggling.

He assured himself that she would not cry out again. Then he turned to the oak cupboard. It was locked but he did not stop to look for a key. He kicked the door in and ransacked the inside.

Aside from a few bits of faded finery, ribbons and such, all he found was a small coin, not enough to buy a loaf of bread.

He searched the rest of the apartment and was finally convinced that the little old woman had lied to him when she said she had money.

He looked to see what he had done to her. She was dead.

No one had seen the two enter; and Roger had left the house as little observed as he had entered.

He seemed to have lost his taste for Paris; for several days later he was back in his home village.

“Mother,” he said contritely, “I have come back to do as you want me to. I’ll find a job and settle down with you—if you will give me another chance.”

Roger’s earnestness was something even his own mother could not resist. She accepted the prodigal’s return for what it seemed to be, a mending of his ways.

For several weeks she had no reason to think otherwise. Roger did look for a job, found one with a farmer; worked hard all day and stayed home every evening. He even began to read a little for the first time in his life. Only it was the Paris newspapers that he read; and read assiduously.

In the meantime the janitress of the house in which Madame Villet was tenant wondered why the old woman had not appeared for so many days. She must be ill, the janitress decided; and mounted to the garret to see.

She knocked repeatedly without getting an answer. She became uneasy and went down and told her husband. A day or two later they decided to break in the door.

They did so and found Madame Villet dead in her bed. The room showed there had been violence in her death.

The police were notified.

The verdict was that Madame Villet had been choked to death. By whom?

The police did all that modern police could to find out the murderer. But all their efforts brought them no nearer to a solution of the murder than that it must have been a man who committed the crime.

The Paris newspapers treated the mystery at no great length; Madame Villet was really poor and the great newspaper reading public is not interested in poor people.

The police too gave the murder little more than routine attention. They really had done as much as they could; and there was no one interested enough to push them to extraordinary effort. So the *dossier* in Madame Villet's murder was filed away in the archives of the Paris police as one of the many unanswered questions gathering dust and oblivion there.

In the Loire village Roger Voron began to get restless. He no longer read the Paris newspapers; he no longer stayed home evenings. The farmer with whom he worked began to complain of his laziness. Finally he discharged him.

Roger made no other effort to find work. His mother began again to worry about him. The neighbors again wondered how so eminently good a woman as Madame Voron could be mother to so worthless a son.

In his boredom Roger sought companionship in a younger ne'er-do-well of the village, Hermette.



The two were birds of a feather and took to each other and to a life of parasitism.

The day came when Madame Voron again said to her son, "Go!"

Roger was willing to go; he had tasted Paris and although it had let him starve he knew there was feasting to be done there—if one had the means.

He knew now too that within himself he had the courage to get the means—easily. The fact that the first time he tried it brought him no money was not the important thing. What mattered was that he knew what to do, knew where to do it and had all the nerve necessary.

Cautiously he broached the scheme to Hermette. At first the latter was frightened; then fascinated by the coolness, the steeliness of his friend. Yes, he would join him in his plan . . . then off they would go together to see the world with money in their pockets.

Roger's grandmother, the well-to-do, lived as I have said, alone in a house in the same village. She was somewhat of a recluse and a miser. She had worked so hard for a provision against old-age poverty that every franc to her was precious. So although aged she kept no servant. Her only companion was a noisy watchdog who barked mechanically most of the night.

Roger and Hermette stole up to her house one night. Hermette's part of the plot was to decoy the

dog with some meat on a string; then to silence him with an iron bar.

The two young men had waited for the dark of the moon and Hermette went first. The dog was lying on the doorstep to the house, drowsily barking away at the night. A stealthy approach brought him to his feet and there was a fresh burst of barking.

Something landed with a soft thud at his feet. He shied away, barking more than ever. Then a pleasant smell made him curious. It was fresh succulent meat. His barks became tentative as he nosed the meat; then rose again as the appetizing morsel moved way. He followed it; suddenly he yelped; then barked no more.

Up in her bedroom Roger's grandmother was awakened by her dog's unusual behavior. Why was he no longer barking?

The door to her room opened. In the doorway stood a figure. "Who is it?" the old woman cried.

"It is I, Roger," was the reply. "Don't be afraid."

But she was afraid. It needed no miser's fear to tell her why Roger had come.

"Where do you keep your money?" he demanded softly, towering over her. "Let me have it without any fuss and I'll go away and never trouble you again."

Her life had become so much interwoven with her little hoard that it was no wonder her fear of

losing her money was as strong as her fear of Roger. She tried to scream for help; but his palm over her mouth silenced her. She tried to beat him, scratch out his eyes. His hand closed about her throat and tightened.

Whether it was that her heart gave out or her breath was cut off, Roger found that once more he was a killer; again an old woman was his victim.

*This time he got some money; not much; he was not able to find his grandmother's hoard, though he spent some time looking for it.*

While he was doing this Hermette was watching outside the house.

He could not know of course what was transpiring at a neighboring house. These neighbors of Roger Voron's grandmother were so used to her dog's barking that any departure from it woke them. This night he stopped barking. The couple sat up in bed and wondered what could have made the difference in the dog's behavior.

The wonder grew to uneasiness. The man of the house took an old hunting gun and stole over to his own neighbors, the two Richet brothers, and woke them.

The three peasants, all armed, stealthily crossed the road to the old woman's house. As they entered the little hedge-enclosed front garden some one sounded a signal whistle.

The peasants rushed forward and a young man

broke from the garden and started to run. One of the peasants shot at him. The runner tripped, fell and was overpowered by the man who shot at him.

The other two peasants ran into the house. One of them was knocked down by burly Roger Voron, who tried to run out of the house. But Roger Voron was in turn knocked over the head with a gun butt. It sent Roger Voron to his knees—and his days of freedom were at an end.

Voron and Hermette were tried for the murder of Roger's grandmother at the assizes in the Loire district. The jury were typical provincial Frenchmen, with only simple emotional and mental processes to guide them as they listened to the defense and to the prosecution.

The defense could only point to the fact that this was the first time Roger had ever been charged with crime. The deed was something to shudder at, yes; but one offense does not make one a criminal who should be given the death penalty. For, the guillotine was what the defense feared.

The prosecution, on the other hand, emphasized that the killing was not only murder. Roger Voron was a matricide. "Murdered his own grandmother!" was the refrain of the prosecution.

The defense had every reason to fear that this consideration would prevail with the jury and that Roger could not escape the ultimate sentence, the guillotine.

Hermette too was a first offender; and although he would be convicted of murder it would not be the murder of his own kin.

The prosecution was about to close its case and it was easy to see what effect its arguments had on the jury.

Suddenly Roger's mother rose in court and with dramatic simplicity asked to be heard.

The defense had made much capital of the sterling character of the mother; and although her interruption was out of the order the judge asked sympathetically,

"What have you to say? Is it a plea for mercy or will it shed some new light on the case?"

"I have something to confess."

The startled courtroom listened.

"God knows, I have said harsh things of my son," Madame Voron said, "and with bitter truth. But the prosecution charges that Roger murdered his own grandmother. That is not the fact. . . . For twenty-five years I have enjoyed a reputation to which I am not entitled. I am supposed to be a good woman. I am not. Twenty-five years ago while Roger's father, the son of the murdered woman, was still alive I was unfaithful to him, my husband. Roger is the son of my lover, not of my husband. The old woman Roger killed was not his grandmother. No one knew this but Roger. He has kept my secret to save my name."

Every one turned to look at Roger. His gentle calm eyes had drooped, so that no one could see the expression in them. Was Madame Voron telling the truth? Was she sacrificing her good name to save her son? Did he really know the dead woman was not his grandmother when he killed her?

The jury in the Voron case were so moved by Madame Voron's avowal that, whether they believed her or not, her plea saved Roger from the guillotine.

He and Hermette were each sentenced to fourteen years in prison; a mild sentence they owed to the fact that theirs was a first offense.

As number 6197 Roger entered Poissy Prison. Later he was transferred to the prison at Pontre-vault. The ordeal he had gone through seemed to have tamed the tiger in him. Indeed it left him spiritless. He became a meek hardworking prisoner, whose only thought seemed to please the prison keepers.

So ingratiating had he become that one day when he tried to make friends with a fellow prisoner, a newcomer, the latter jeered,

"Go use your sweetness on your guards, you worm!"

This newcomer was a dour, rather small-framed man by the name of Bebert. He and a confederate had murdered a merchant and robbed him. The confederate escaped and the police never learned who he was. For, Bebert refused to tell. The police prom-

ised him mitigation of sentence if he informed on his confederate. Bebert did not say a word.

He was sentenced to deportation for life to the French penal colony at l'Ile de Ré, in the tropics. Every French convict knows of l'Ile de Ré and most of them would prefer any fate to exile on that blistering plague spot in the antipodes.

Roger knew how loyal Bebert had been to a fellow criminal; the whole prison knew it and admired Bebert for it; in fact that was the reason Roger tried to cultivate Bebert's friendship. It hit him harder therefore to have this undersized man call him, Roger Voron, strong, big, with power in his hands, a worm.

"You say that because you don't in the least know my character!" Roger retorted. "And because you think you are safe from these hands of mine."

Bebert shrugged his shoulders. "You think because you killed an old woman you are a master criminal."

"*One* old woman?" Roger repeated, his eyes on Bebert. "If you only knew!"

But Bebert did not seem interested. He had something more important to him on his mind than Roger's character. Bebert did not want to go to l'Ile de Ré, as he would have to do in another week. He would do anything in the world not to go there. Pontrevault was not a bad place; its keepers were not unkind; Pontrevault was in France; civilization

was all around it; at Pontrevault Bebert's woman could come occasionally to see him. . . .

He and Roger were alone in the prison corridor. Roger was saying something in a low tone, trying still to make an impression on him.

“. . . and all this time the Paris police have not the slightest idea I am the man who did it.”

Bebert asked absently, “Did what?”

Roger was furious. “Do you mean to say you were not listening to me?”

“My mind wandered. Besides I don't care what you did or did not do.”

Which of course made Roger all the more eager to tell again the story of how he had strangled little old Madame Villet in her garret home in rue Aubry-le-Bouchèr in the big city. This time Bebert listened.

For, the idea came to him how he could avoid having to go to l'Ile de Ré the following week. If his plan worked he would be kept in France for some time to come. It would cost so little an effort to accomplish, this plan of his.

He got Roger to repeat his story several times until he knew by heart all the details of the murder.

Then he waited till the day he was to be shipped off to the penal colony.

At the last moment he told one of the guards to summon the prison warden. “Why?” the guard asked.

“Last October in the rue Aubry-le-Boucher an



old woman was strangled to death. The Paris police have never found out who did it. I can tell them."

"Oh," said the guard, "our Bebert doesn't like the thought of l'Ile de Ré and thinks to win a respite by a little informing on some fellow murderer, eh?"

"Perhaps," Bebert said indifferently.

The warden came, prepared to have Bebert act informer. Prison seemed to have done something to the man who at his own trial was loyal to a fellow murderer.

"So you know who murdered an old woman in Paris," the warden said. "All right, who did it?"

"I did," Bebert said.

He proceeded to describe his crime with such detail that the warden was impressed.

Bebert did not go to l'Ile de Ré next day but was detained in Pontrevault, while his confession was being confirmed by the Paris police.

For several days Bebert enjoyed the fruits of his little scheme. Then a detective came down from Paris and went into conference with the warden.

The detective said, "Bebert lies. He never saw Madame Villet. We found fingerprints on the scene of the murder, and they are not the fingerprints of Bebert. But we should find the real murderer in a few minutes."

"What makes you think so?" the warden asked.

"Bebert's confession contains details which he could not possibly have read in the newspapers. He

was in prison when the murder was committed; he counted on your ignorance of the date to win a delay in deportation. It means therefore that he must have learned these details in prison. . . . Let's take a look at the fingerprints of all your recent arrivals."

That was how Roger Voron came to trial for the murder of Madame Villet. And this time nothing his mother could say saved him from the guillotine.

## A GRIM TALE OF VIENNA WOODS

**P**RACTICALLY every executive of the Vienna detective department is a university trained man ; some of them are Ph.D.s ; and the stamp of the scientific laboratory marks the work of the Vienna police more often than that of any other police in the world. Let us see how this has worked out in their handling of the Lainzer Tiergarten murder.

The weather about Vienna on July 17, 1928, was capricious, blazing sunlight alternating with gathering clouds, sultriness one minute, blasts of wind the next. Toward five in the afternoon it looked as if the threat of summer storm would come to a head and people scurried for shelter, warned by the increasing thunder and the glare of lightning through banks of tumbling clouds.

In Lainzer Tiergarten, a public park outside and partly inside Vienna, is a small police station and the three policemen assigned to that post were hurrying there to escape the threatened downpour.

Suddenly they heard what sounded like a shot. At the same time they saw about half a mile away in the forest a small blaze. At first they thought lightning had hit some deadwood; but they decided to investigate.

Before the policemen could reach the spot the rain came down and drenched everything. Under a tree the police found the body of a woman. Unmistakable were the bullet wounds in her forehead. Her clothes had been set on fire. The rain had quenched the flames but not before part of her face had been consumed.

The violent rain had washed away all traces of the murderer, so far as footprints were concerned.

What the police saw had perhaps better be given in their own language, taken from the printed circulars they later sent out.

“The body was that of a woman between twenty and thirty (perhaps older); about 160 cm. tall; slim; brown hair bobbed; eyes reddish brown; oval face; turned-up nose; earlobes thick and adhering to sides of head; a mole under the right eye, another on the right cheek about 3 cm. from the corner of the mouth.

“The teeth are pretty and well cared for. In the upper jaw three molars are gold capped on the left side; in the lower, four teeth are gold capped on the left side; one is missing on the right.”

Then followed a description of her clothing; the gold bracelet set with sapphires; her earrings; and the buckle of her belt; the probable origin of their manufacture and their approximate cost.

On the breast of the dead woman were several pieces of solid alcohol, such as is used on portable cooking outfits. By the side of the body was an empty bottle of benzine; and a partly burned newspaper.

The first problem the police had to solve was the identity of the corpse. The printed description and the radio account of the murder, as broadcast by the police, brought no results whatever.

Whereupon in the laboratories that are used by the police of Vienna a grim bit of sculpturing was undertaken. A sculptor, a dermatologist, a dentist, a hairdresser and others, each an expert in his line, participated. From the contours of the skull, from the injured parts of the face and from the formation of the jaws and teeth, a face was reconstructed in wax, an attempted likeness of the woman's when she was alive. Hair of the same color and texture as hers was given the wax head and arranged as the woman seemed to have worn it. The skin was tinted. The eyes were reproduced. Then photographs of the result were taken and included in the circulars in colors which were sent throughout Europe.

Notwithstanding all this, weeks and months, finally a year passed without any identification forthcoming. The police of Vienna doubled their ef-

forts. Photographs and descriptions of the dead woman's teeth were printed in the technical dental journals and the coöperation of the profession was asked. Would all dentists please look through their records and see if they could identify the murdered woman as a former patient.

Still no result.

Then the Vienna police applied good Teutonic logic and thoroughness to this phase of the hunt. They reasoned that the average dentist reading this appeal in a technical journal would give the matter little, if any, attention. It would be a different matter if an official of the Vienna police personally supervised such a search. Which is what the police department undertook to do.

Every dentist in Vienna was visited. Every dentist was required to look through his files of work done on former patients and to compare every such record with the description of the dental work of the woman murdered in Lainzer Tiergarten.

At last one dentist, over whose shoulder the head of the Fingerprint Bureau of the Vienna police was peering, exclaimed,

"Surely this must be the same set of teeth, recorded on this card of mine and in your description. Let's see who it is. . . . Frau Fellner, wife of Andreas Fellner."

The dentist was taken to see the wax reconstruction of the dead woman's face.

"That's the woman," he said. "I remember her quite well now. But I've lost track of her."

He remembered she was a dancer, married to a Roumanian but divorced from him a short while before she stopped coming to the dentist's office. She seemed to be having a gay time of it in spite of the break-up of her marriage, the dentist remembered. She told him, however, that she was still afraid of what her divorced husband might do to her. He was jealous and, she admitted, with good reason. Her husband had threatened to kill her if she did not mend her ways.

A still alarm was broadcast for the capture of Andreas Fellner. He was discovered in Trieste and arrested. He was a theatrical man, only partly working in the theatre, spending the rest of his time in the pursuit of a gay life.

He was taken to Vienna and an intensive grilling of Fellner brought the police something, not much. No, Fellner insisted, he did not know where his wife was. Yes, the reconstructed face was an excellent likeness. He did not recognize her clothes; but the bracelet was one he had given her.

Yes, he did threaten to kill her if she did not stop going off on excursions with other men. But he decided finally to be sensible about it and let her have her divorce.

The Vienna police official who was questioning him asked,

"Where were you on July 17, 1928?"

Fellner fidgeted. "I'm a travelling theatrical man. I can't think back over a year ago and tell you exactly where I was on such and such a day."

"All right, we'll help you check up your business dates."

Fellner became uneasy. "I don't always travel on business. I have a little car of my own and often I take excursions off the beaten path. In fact I think I was touring about in my car on pleasure at about the time of Elsa's death."

"Then you must recollect the name of your travelling companion, who will vouch that you were not in Lainzer Tiergarten on that day."

Fellner showed unmistakable alarm. "She would not help me. She is a respectable married woman. It would mean disgrace to her. And we have quarrelled since. She would be sure to deny it. . . ."

"Nevertheless you had better establish an excellent alibi, if you can."

Thus pressed Fellner racked his memory. Suddenly his face lighted up.

"I am almost sure that July 17 was the day when I had an automobile accident on a road back of Trieste," he said. "It was not a serious one but it did keep me out overnight. My car was useless until next day when aid was sent me."

It did not sound convincing, this attempt at an alibi; but the Vienna police sent an investigator to



Trieste. In a few days he telegraphed back. On July 16th, the day before Frau Fellner was murdered, Fellner's automobile was stalled on a lonely road twenty miles out of Trieste. A passing peasant saw their plight and further on the road he notified two mounted members of the Italian police. It was they who came with a garage mechanic and helped Fellner resume his journey.

With official entries to support his alibi Fellner was declared innocent and released. But the Vienna police asked him,

"Will you help us find Frau Fellner's murderer?"

"I don't know that I can be of much help," he said. "After Elsa left me in Trieste, several months before our divorce, I lost all track of her. I can only suggest that one of her current lovers may have killed her for the same reason I felt like doing it."

With this slender clue, the Vienna police resumed the hunt.

The date on which Frau Fellner left Trieste was finally determined. It proved to be a few days before her death.

On the theory that she left to join someone a search was made of all telegraph records for that week both in Trieste and Vienna. Fortunately the files of all telegrams sent as well as those received are kept in both cities.

A duplicate was found of a telegram sent by

"Elsa Donau" from Trieste to "Gustave Bauer" in Vienna. It read, "Coming".

Donau was not Elsa Fellner's name, of course; but along that slight trail the Vienna police proceeded. Gustave Bauer was found to be a wholesale dealer in fountain pens in Vienna. At the time the police got his name he was away in Berlin on a business trip. Two detectives were sent to Berlin to keep Bauer in sight while others investigated him.

His business reputation was excellent. His private life was found to be that of a gay bachelor. Women were his preoccupation.

Bauer was arrested in Berlin. He was a powerfully built man, with large sultry eyes, sensual lips and square jaws. From the first he showed himself bellicose.

"You have no regard for my business engagements," he told the detectives from Vienna. "Why should I help you in any way? If you succeed in getting me to trial then it will be time for me to answer your charges. I will only say this: I never saw or heard of this Frau Fellner."

This seemed borne out by a search made of Bauer's effects. He proved to be a combination of Don Juan and an orderly recorder of his own amours. Love letters from a considerable number of women were found. Each woman had a separate volume devoted to her, in which her love letters were neatly pasted; and every rendezvous between Bauer and

*her was recorded as to date, place, and the expenses the meeting involved.*

There was not a single entry in any of his books mentioning Elsa Fellner or any other Elsa, nor was there any other name traced as hers.

But a former valet of Bauer's was questioned by the Vienna police. He told the police that about the time of Frau Fellner's death Bauer had told him to go to the railroad station and meet a woman who would be coming on the train from Trieste.

The valet was asked to look at the reconstruction of Frau Fellner's face. "Yes," he said. "I think that's the woman, though, of course, he's had so many I can't keep track of them all."

Bauer was confronted with his ex-valet's statement.

He smiled sardonically.

"We'll see at the trial how far such testimony on the part of a discharged servant will go," he said.

Nevertheless the Vienna police went ahead on the theory that the valet might be telling the truth; and they found other witnesses who established the fact that Bauer at least knew Frau Fellner.

Bauer was confronted with the new evidence against him. He reflected and changed his tactics.

"Yes, I knew Frau Fellner. So did many other men know her. Lied? Of course I lied to you. But I saw nothing of Frau Fellner within several days of her death."

More work on the part of the Vienna police brought out the fact that Bauer and Frau Fellner were seen together early in the morning of the day of the murder. Again he faced his inquisitors calmly.

"Yes, that was the morning we quarrelled and parted," he said. "I was interested in another woman by then and Frau Fellner too told me she was through with me, saying she had already provided herself with my successor. She was to meet him in Lainzer Tiergarten that afternoon, she told me.

"I don't know the other man's name or anything else about him."

"Did you go to Lainzer Tiergarten that afternoon?" he was asked.

"I was never in Lainzer Tiergarten in my life."

A Vienna detective held up a leather-covered engagement book. In it Bauer had entered the time and places of amorous rendezvous for two years past. One of the items was thoroughly blacked out with ink.

"What was it you inked out?" the detective asked, showing Bauer the item.

Bauer gave it scarcely a glance. "I don't in the least remember."

The notebook was taken to one of the laboratories of the Vienna police. An expert in such work applied chemicals to the ink over the original entry and dissolved away all but the traces of what had been written in the first place. Then the paper was placed under a microscope lens.

The word "Tiergarten" came out quite distinctly. Along with it there were made out a date, July 25, two days before Frau Fellner's murder; and a woman's name.

The name was not Frau Fellner's, but that of the wife of a Viennese merchant.

By this time the Vienna police felt they had no more need to question Bauer. They had pieced together what seemed to them the story of Bauer and Frau Fellner.

The two had met some months before her death, the police decided. Frau Fellner then went back to Trieste to get her divorce from her husband. Bauer was among those who visited Frau Fellner in Trieste. Then he went back to Vienna.

Their affair must have made only a minor item in Bauer's amorous career, for according to his own records, while she was still getting her divorce in Trieste, Bauer was already involved in another affair with a woman in Vienna.

Some inkling of this must have aroused Frau Fellner. She telegraphed Bauer, "Coming". Then she took the train for Vienna.

Bauer was about to leave Vienna for an unofficial honeymoon with his latest amour. He was more deeply involved emotionally this time than usual. The arrival of Frau Fellner would endanger his affair with the other woman.

He sent his valet to the railroad station to meet

Frau Fellner; he himself was detained on a business errand, as the police later ascertained. But he joined Frau Fellner for dinner at a café-restaurant that evening.

He must have convinced her that she was still his beloved, for they made a rendezvous for Lainzer Tiergarten for the following day, to picnic, Bauer must have told her.

Frau Fellner dressed for a day out of doors. She met Bauer in the city and they went together to a secluded spot in Lainzer Tiergarten.

The fact that Bauer carried packages of food, a little portable cooking stove and bricks of solid alcohol for use in it, must have seemed to Frau Fellner to support his promise of a picnic.

The storm was approaching, perhaps unnoted by the couple until about a minute before the rain came down. Then Bauer got into action.

He took out a revolver and shot the woman down.

From a small bottle he took out of his pocket, he sprinkled some benzine on Frau Fellner's hair and clothes, and some of it on a newspaper he had brought along. On the chest of the prostrate corpse he placed the cakes of solid alcohol. All this may have taken him less than a minute. Then he struck a match and set fire to the newspaper. With it as a torch he touched off the clothing soaked with benzine. The cakes of solid alcohol caught fire.

Believing his work accomplished he ran away.

The sudden rush of rain may have raised uneasiness in his mind. He may have even started to go back to the scene of the murder; but by then the policemen were there.

The completeness of the case against Bauer must have decided him finally that his plight was becoming a serious business. In his Berlin prison he was seen communicating with a fellow prisoner.

A few days later the other man left the jail, as his term was up.

Neither he nor Bauer in the least suspected that they had been spied on. The released man walked out of the prison gates a free man. He thought he was also free of surveillance.

He went to the nearest post office and mailed two letters.

Those letters reached not their addresses but the Vienna police.

One letter was written by Bauer to a friend, the other to a former mistress. In each he entreated aid. Desperately he needed, he wrote, a sound alibi for July 27, 1928.

How well the police of Vienna have woven their noose about Gustave Bauer a jury will decide this fall when he is tried for the murder of Frau Fellner.

## VI

### THE KILLER WHO LAUGHED LAST

**H**AD Charles Barataud lived, say in Renaissance Italy, when greeds and complicated plotting ran riot, he might or might not have surpassed his time; today he stands out startlingly, even in Limoges, famous for its porcelain works and notorious in France for its crimes.

Charles Barataud was born there thirty-six years ago. His father owned a small porcelain factory and worked hard but made little. Nevertheless young Charles demanded much of his father; pocket money without end, extravagant wardrobe, swanky schooling, the latest thing in guns and rifles; for Charles had a passion for hunting. And his father indulged him in everything.

As a hunter Charles became famous for marksmanship as well as for his greed for the sport itself. His bag was always filled to bursting with rabbits, pheasants, game of every kind.

He excelled in other sports too, for he was wiry,



quick, and ruthless; when he set out to win in tennis or at wrestling, he went at it as if he were out for blood.

He chose a military academy for his schooling and was graduated third in his class. Then the Great War came and Charles was conscripted. He was a disobedient soldier but made good as a killer.

His father meanwhile also made good in his line. The war brought him such prosperity that when Charles was demobilized in 1919 he came back to find his father one of the richest manufacturers in the country.

Charles needed do nothing now but spend his father's money. The war had aroused strong lusts in natures like Charles' and he plunged into a career of dissipation in Limoges that enriched many a night club and dive there and became a drain on his father's purse.

In the early part of 1928, when this story proper commences, Charles Barataud was a hectic figure to contemplate. Of middle stature and wiry as ever, he was keyed up by drugs and alcohol until his nerves were taut as fiddle strings. He might have been considered good looking, for he had a slender oval face, a high forehead and a head of glossy curling black hair; but his nose was a little like a hawk's, his mouth was a cruel slit and his eyes were extraordinary. They had thick lids, over staring white orbs with small black pupils that glittered;

and a shifty expression in them alternated with a madman's glare when he was aroused.

Life for Charles became increasingly a hunt for stronger thrills and the money wherewith to buy them. For, his father began at last to protest. Charles' giddy life was not only a heavy charge on his father but was also arousing the ire of the working classes in Limoges.

Being an industrial centre and at that time in a period of economic stress Limoges was a hotbed of discontent with our economic system. Communists elected their candidates; and no small part of their argument was the spectacle of a rich man's son wasting in a single night of debauch enough to keep a working-class family in necessities for a month.

Finally Charles' father brought to an abrupt end his son's supply of easy money.

Charles Barataud found himself plunged in debt; and more than ever he craved money to keep up his way of living.

Like many another waster he was extremely generous toward his cronies. Most of all he lavished money on nineteen-year-old Bertrand Peynet, a soft, good-looking youth.

Under stress, Barataud's mind was rat-like in its intelligence; he could think quickly and tortuously; knew when to dodge and when to attack; and was perfectly at home in the underworld.

With only his character and his wits to enable

him to find the ready money he must have, he sought out a man by the name of Roux, a real estate agent. Roux in the past had fallen foul of the law, but he had paid with prison; and was slowly regaining public confidence by his efforts to live down his past.

"Look here, Roux," Barataud said to him, "if you can find a customer I have a bargain that should bring you and me handsome commissions. I know an old eccentric who has timber land worth a million francs. It has been assessed at that by the authorities. For a couple of days I have an option to buy it for 600,000 francs. If I can sell that land it will not only be a bargain for the buyer, whoever he is; there will also be 30,000 francs apiece for you and me. *But*—there is a condition attached to the sale. This old codger once got a bad check and has a perfect phobia on the subject of checks. He will sell his timber land at a real sacrifice but only if he gets the purchase price cash in hand. . . . What do you think of it?"

Roux pondered Barataud's proposition. "I think I know just the man for us; Lascaux, the lumber merchant. I'll talk to him."

Lascaux, a burly citizen, was approached and became interested.

Whereupon Barataud made arrangements to have Roux and Lascaux go with him to meet his nameless "gentleman farmer".

"He lives six hours' drive out of town and I'll take you there in my car," said Barataud. "He is

such a crank that he will transact business only for an hour after he has had his breakfast; after that he will not listen to the biggest bargain in the world. To get to him in the morning we will have to leave Limoges late at night. And you won't forget, M. Lascaux, will you, to bring along the 600,000 francs in cash?"

"I'll have it with me," Lascaux assured him.

Barataud set the rendezvous for January 12, midnight. He would call for Roux and Lascaux in his car. "And remember, not a soul is to know about our leaving," he warned. "We don't want anyone to get ahead of us."

They promised secrecy.

That evening Barataud went to the garage where he kept his car and dawdled about, gossiping with the mechanic there. His eyes, as he talked, however, were sharply on the lookout.

After some time a taxi rolled in. It was owned by the man who was driving it, Etienne Faure, who made a good living with his taxi for himself, his wife and his two children. By dint of long hours and hard work he had managed even to buy their home, a single-story house with a bit of garden.

Faure joined Barataud and the mechanic in small talk. Then Barataud excused himself, saying he had a "gallant" date to keep. He left in his own automobile.

The taxi driver kept on chatting with the me-

chanic until the telephone in the garage office rang.

"Excuse me a moment, Etienne," the garage man said. "I hear the telephone."

He came back soon. "Etienne, it's for you," he said. "A woman's voice but not your wife."

Faure was puzzled. "Who else would know that I am at the garage?" he wondered.

The mechanic gave him a nudge. "G'wan, you rascal, trying to pull the wool over my eyes! But don't worry, I shan't tell your wife."

"Oh, stop it!" Faure said impatiently. "You know I don't play around with women."

"Just the same it sounds like a woman's voice."

Faure went into the office and took up the receiver.

"This is Faure," he said.

"You don't know me," said a voice, a woman's apparently. "But several times I rode in your taxi and tonight I rode past just as you were entering the garage. I'm out on the road near the Vincou bridge. I went out driving with a man and—we have had a quarrel. I am waiting for you to take me into the city."

"But I'm through for the day," Faure protested.

"I'll pay double fare."

Faure hesitated, then said he would come.

"I'm counting on you," said the voice.

Faure went back and told the mechanic he had a fare to call for. Getting into his taxi, he drove out of the garage.

As he struck the dark country road leading to the bridge at Varogne over the river Vincou, he probably did not give much thought to the lone automobile ahead of him until suddenly the other car stopped. Faure was about to pass it when the driver hailed him and got out of the car.

It was Barataud.

"Oh, is that you, Faure?" Barataud came over to Faure. "My car is stalled. Help me, will you? I'm not very good at fixing motors."

The road at this point is flanked by woods and the night was thick with mist. The headlights of the taxi were Faure's only guide, for Barataud's lights were out. Faure got out and went toward Barataud's car.

"What's the trouble?" Faure asked, lifting the hood of the motor. He leaned over to look.

Barataud stood behind him. Unseen by Faure, Barataud's right hand issued from under his overcoat, clutching a hatchet.

Barataud drew back his arm, then brought the back of the hatchet down on Faure's skull.

The taxi man fell forward over the motor; then slid to the road.

Barataud dropped to his knees and felt Faure's heart.

Then slipping his arms under the body, Barataud raised it and carried it to the door of the supposed stalled car. Faure was not a heavy man and Barataud had little difficulty getting the body into his car. He drove the car a short distance into the woods.

Then he went back on foot to Faure's taxi, and drove it also into the woods a short distance. In a hollow surrounded by a thicket of shrubbery he stopped the taxi, extinguished the lights and got out.

He backed away, straining to see if the taxi was visible in the hiding place he had chosen for it. Satisfied that he had chosen well, Barataud on foot hurried back to his own car.

He got in and with his passenger in the bottom of the car Barataud drove off, until he reached the river Vincou. He stopped the car at a steep point of the river bank. The road was deserted and, as Barataud knew, there was little likelihood of anyone coming by at that hour. He had prepared for all this and behind some shrubbery he got several stones of the size he wanted.

One by one he disposed of the stones in Faure's pockets.

Then hoisting the dead taxi driver to his shoulder Barataud carried the body to the river and threw it in.

On Barataud's car there was a movable headlight. For a few seconds he turned its beam on the

black water where he had sent Faure down; and seemed satisfied with his job. He went back to his car and drove off.

When he came to the point in the road near where Faure's taxi was hidden, Barataud stopped. Raising the hood of his own motor he did something to it that would make it seem powerless until he himself attended to it. Abandoning his car, he struck into the woods and came to Faure's taxi. He took Faure's seat and drove the taxi out of the wood and on to Limoges.

In the city he drove to his father's factory yards and roused the night watchman.

"Open the door to the truck garage," Barataud ordered. "My car got stalled out in the country and I borrowed this one to come back with. I'll call for it late tomorrow night."

The watchman was accustomed to the younger Barataud's vagaries, thought nothing of this incident and went back to sleep after the other had gone.

From the factory yards Barataud went to a public telephone and called up his crony, Peynet, at his home.

"Bertrand? This is Charles," he said. "Come on, I've got some lively company. Say nothing, of course, where you are going."

Between Barataud and Peynet there was an intense and unwholesome attachment and companionship in debauchery. Despite the fifteen years' dif-



ference in their ages, Bertrand Peynet had every reason to believe that Barataud was more devoted to him than to any other human being.

"All right, Charles, I'm coming," Peynet said. "Don't worry, I'll keep quiet about it."

He joined Barataud at a rendezvous. Peynet asked Barataud where the others were who were to join them. Barataud said,

"Oh, you know these gay devils. They have no sense of time when it comes to keeping an appointment. They'll show up any minute, I'm sure."

No one came; but Peynet got home long after sunrise.

All that day Barataud kept to his room. Late in the evening he went to the garage where he had left Faure's taxi and called for Roux and Lascaux to take them to the "old eccentric" who had such a bargain in timber land for them.

"Whose car is this?" Roux asked, as he and Lascaux got into the automobile Barataud had brought. "It doesn't look like yours."

"What difference does it make?" Barataud asked angrily. Then in a change of tone. "My own car is stalled on the road; and I borrowed a friend's car for our trip. On our way back I will try to fix my own car and bring it back with us. . . . Lascaux, you have the money with you, 600,000 francs—in cash?"

"I have it," Lascaux told him.

They drove off, Barataud at the wheel, Roux and Lascaux in back. Barataud had not a word to say as they left the city behind and entered the forest-flanked road. Roux and Lascaux noticed that he seemed under great nervous tension; and thought it was anxiety to put the sale through.

Suddenly the car stopped and Barataud got out.

"Wait here," he said to them, his voice tight with nerves. "My car is in the woods here. I'll see if it's all right and will be back in a few minutes."

Roux and Lascaux waited. Roux, who knew Barataud better than Lascaux did, wondered what had come over Barataud, so curious was his behavior. Lascaux, who had most of his available fortune in his pocket, was also uneasy about Barataud's manner and conscious of the darkness and the loneliness of the road.

In a few minutes they saw Barataud emerging from the woods. Then the headlights of their car revealed something he had in his hands.

It was a hatchet.

And they saw the man's eyes. Roux half rose in his seat. Lascaux, who had secretly brought a weapon along, took out a revolver and held it in his lap.

Roux cried out, "Barataud, what are you doing with a hatchet?"

Barataud did not answer. His staring white eyes, with their black pupils shrunken, sent a chill

through his two passengers. Slowly he opened the door and insinuated himself into the car; the hatchet he held in back of him.

"Barataud, do you hear me?" Roux shouted. "What are you doing with that hatchet?"

Roux's arms were out, ready to parry and lunge.

Lascaux raised his revolver.

For the first time Barataud saw it. He stared at it. The maniac glare in his eyes wavered before the reality of Lascaux's revolver. The weapon must have dissipated the fog of blood in Barataud's brain. The hand with the hatchet wavered, drooped. Barataud shrank out of the car.

"I—I—" he stammered. "I meant to fix my car with it."

Lascaux drew a deep breath. "With the hatchet?" he demanded.

"Yes, why not?"

"Where did you find it?" Roux asked sharply. "You didn't have it when you left us?"

"Oh, it was in my own car. . . . But what does it matter?" It was Barataud who was impatient now. "We're going back to town."

"What!" the two men cried. "What about that timber deal?"

"Nothing!" Barataud's voice was harsh. "I played a joke on you!"

His passengers did not reply. They watched

him, Roux half out of his seat, Lascaux with his revolver handy.

Barataud drove them back to the city limits, then stopped his car.

"Get out!" he ordered.

The two men scrambled out of the car. Roux growled. "I've a good mind to beat you up, you swine!" he said.

"Come along, Roux," Lascaux said uneasily. "He's insane and should be behind bars!"

But Barataud swung Faure's taxi about and was off along the river road.

His complicated plan had gone wrong. Yet it had such promise when he planned it! Faure would be missing. Faure's taxi would be found on the road with two men murdered in it. It was known that Lascaux carried large sums of money about him. The police would look for Faure and would not find him. The robbery and the murder would be charged against him. And Barataud would have six hundred thousand francs to spend and nothing to worry about. . . .

Now his pockets were empty and he had a taxi to hide.

He came to a steeply sloping road that led to the river. Without stopping the car Barataud got out and stood on the running board of the car. The car kept on, plunging down the slope. Just before it reached the river, Barataud jumped. He fell and

rolled down the bank but stopped himself before he reached the river.

The taxi bounded, turned a somersault and with a heavy splash disappeared under the water.

Barataud climbed back to the road and rested. Then he went back to the woods where his own automobile had been hidden all this time. He tinkered with the motor, got in and drove leisurely to Limoges.

For three days and nights he made his usual round of cafés, bars, dives, cinemas and prizefights. His crony, Peynet, noticed, however, a difference in him. Barataud, always greedy for carouse, now seemed bored and at the same time feverish.

Meanwhile the whole city was agitated by the news of the disappearance of Etienne Faure, a hard worker and decent citizen, father of a family dependent upon him. For two days his wife and children had been frantic with the mystery of his leaving.

Then the river gave up its dead; his body was washed ashore near the bridge of Varogne.

A day later the river revealed the taxi. The week before it had hurtled into the river a collision had taken place at that point between two small river boats. The wrecks on the bottom of the river had prevented the taxi from sinking wholly out of sight.

The police of Limoges aided by the detectives of the *service de sûreté* of the federal police went to

work on the case. Limoges had been having too many unpunished crimes, too many unsolved murders, too many miscarriages of justice. So the police exerted themselves to the utmost and the clamor the crime had aroused helped them.

Barataud was driving home alone one afternoon when a car drew alongside with several men in it.

"We want to talk to you, M. Barataud," said their spokesman.

Barataud's eyes gleamed.

His foot stole forward to step on the gas and his right hand went toward his pocket. But the other car darted across his path and blocked his escape. Barataud stopped his car and smiled ruefully.

"I suppose I've been speeding again, M. Fressard?" he asked.

"We will discuss that at the Commissariat of Police," the police official said. He got in with Barataud, took his place at the wheel, motioned to three of his men to get in with them and drove to the police headquarters. There Barataud was searched and a revolver was found.

M. Fressard motioned Barataud to a seat, then bluntly announced,

"You are arrested for the murder of Etienne Faure."

Barataud's eyes narrowed, his gash of a mouth

tightened, his face became seamed, his nose showed a white ridge of bone.

For whole minutes he did not say anything. Then he slumped in his chair with an air of utter defeat. His eyes closed. His voice went dead as he said,

“M. Fressard, accord me one small favor and I will tell you all you want to know.”

“What do you want?” Fressard asked.

“I have brought much sorrow to my father but he is inexpressibly dear to me. Let me go home—under guard of course—and say good-bye to him. And if at the same time I can change my clothes, it is all I can reasonably ask of you. In return—I will confess.”

Fressard thought it over. A confession would save the police much work.

“Let me have your confession,” Fressard said, “and I will let you see your father.”

“In my own home,” Barataud insisted.

“In your own home.”

Barataud sighed. “All right. . . . I killed Etienne Faure. I disposed of his taxi in the river. I did it to make it look as if he had done what I had planned to do and failed—to rob and kill Lascaux and Roux.”

His confession was full, circumstantial and convincing.

Barataud signed it. Then he stood up. "Now, to my father's house."

M. Fressard pressed a button and several detectives headed by a sergeant entered.

They took Charles downstairs, a car was brought, and the whole party started for the Barataud home.

The police watched their prisoner closely until they got him into the house; then they relaxed their vigilance somewhat. The house was surrounded and escape out of the question.

M. Barataud, the father, was not at home at the time. There would be a wait while telephone messages went about the city in search of the manufacturer.

Dispiritedly Charles Barataud asked the police sergeant, "May I go up to my room to change my linen?"

The sergeant had already been instructed by M. Fressard.

"Yes," he said.

Barataud was allowed to go up alone. After all, the detectives decided, if their chief was not in the least uneasy about letting him come why should they be?

Barataud went up to his den on the second floor of the house and opened the door. He knew his friend Peynet was there; he was always there at that time of the day.



"Why, Charles," Peynet cried, "what—?"

Barataud did not answer but went to the telephone on his desk. He did not even look at his friend as he took up the receiver and called a number. He got it.

"Is this the office of M. Allegret, the lawyer?" Barataud asked on the telephone.

Peynet exclaimed with astonishment. Barataud was speaking, not in his own voice, but with an excellent imitation of Peynet's own.

"Ah, M. Allegret!" Barataud spoke rapidly, still in Peynet's voice. "Listen well, M. Allegret. This is Bertrand Peynet speaking. Charles Barataud has been arrested for the murder of Etienne Faure. He is innocent. I have good reason to know it. I cannot endure that he should be tried for the crime. I cannot and will not consent to live on. We are both here in his room. We have decided to die together."

The receiver clattered to the table.

Barataud darted to the wall of an alcove, where stood a rack of hunting guns. He snatched one up and found it, as he expected, loaded. Throwing the butt up to his shoulder, he aimed at Peynet.

Meanwhile M. Allegret frantically telephoned the Barataud house. One of the detectives answered it.

"Quick!" M. Allegret cried. "Up in Charles' room—he and Peynet mean to commit suicide—"

"Upstairs, quick!" the detective roared to his colleagues. They ran for the stairs.

When they were half way to Charles' room a shot sounded.

The police burst into the room.

Crumpled in a chair was Bertrand Peynet, dead, a hole in his chest.

Barataud was standing with a smoking rifle in his hand.

"You killed him!" the detectives cried.

Barataud was coldly calm.

"No, he killed himself," he said. "We were to die together. I tried to kill myself too. But the trigger missed fire. . . . And I did not kill Etienne Faure."

"What! Why, you confessed!"

"I confessed to a lie. I did it to be enabled to come here and die with my dear friend."

"But your confession is full of detail. If you didn't kill Faure, who did?" a detective insisted.

"I know—and will not tell!" Barataud said.

That was his story and stubbornly he persisted in it—all through the sixteen months it took to get the case to trial.

His father threw all the resources of a rich man into the battle to get his son acquitted, or at least to save him from the guillotine. The son tried to win sympathy by two not very impressive attempts at suicide while the trial was going on. The best lawyers

in the land labored to prove that Charles Barataud was shielding the tragic secret of a dead friend. Hundreds of witnesses were called. Highly paid experts testified on each side.

The whole country followed the trial with impassioned interest. As to Limoges, it was a source of anxiety to the authorities. The city was seething with fury against the degenerate who had killed a humble taxi driver, and the rich father who was pouring out a fortune for his defense. Communist orators harangued at factory gates. If capitalist law were not prevented from doing it, they said, Barataud would be allowed to go free, because he was the son of a rich man.

Processions of workers surged about the courthouse during the trial, shouting to the jury,

“Death! Give him death!”

The day came when the arguments on both sides had been summed up and the judge was instructing the jury of simple citizens in whose hands rested Barataud's life. In effect the judge told them that they were to decide two questions. Was Barataud guilty of the murder of Etienne Faure? And was he guilty of the murder of Bertrand Peynet? If so, did the jury see any extenuating circumstances in either killing?

The jury retired for deliberation. In the jury room an intelligent merchant, their foreman, said to them,

"By the judge's instructions I am permitted to delegate my position to another of you. I am not a lawyer and I do not want to commit any blunder. We have among us a notary, M. Brulebois, who will undoubtedly carry out a foreman's duty better than I. I yield my position to him."

M. Brulebois, a typical none-too-intelligent small-town notary, blushed as he accepted the tribute. Then the jury settled down to their deliberations.

It did not take them long to agree. Barataud had murdered Etienne Faure in cold blood without the slightest circumstance in extenuation. He must die by the guillotine.

His fate being thus decided the jury then awarded the family of the murdered man the damages they sued for, 450,000 francs.

In connection with the murder of Peynet the jury thought there was a possibility that Barataud had killed him out of the wish to die with him. The question was an academic one, after all, since they had already condemned Barataud to death. So they voted that there were extenuating circumstances in Barataud's second murder.

The little notary was instructed to fill out the blank on which the jury's verdict was to be recorded.

Then the jury filed into a courtroom packed with spectators. Thousands waited outside the courthouse to hear Barataud's fate.

M. Brulebois, more flustered than ever, stammered as he read from the paper he had filled out. The courtroom gasped. With a shock they heard the foreman read the written verdict that while Barataud was guilty of murder the jury found there were extenuating circumstances.

Even in the jury box a fierce whispering sounded. "No, no, that was not what we meant!"

For everybody knew that the young notary had committed a serious blunder. As the verdict stood recorded, with its finding of extenuating circumstances, Barataud could not by law be sentenced to die by the guillotine.

Even the judge was agitated. He had no alternative but to abide by the blundering verdict rendered by the foreman. He could only sentence Barataud to life imprisonment.

Some one dashed outside the courtroom with the news. A roar welled up from thousands of throats. It swelled and spread throughout the city. Crowds surged about the prison where Barataud was cowering. When the newspapers announced the verdict, the crowds grew and raged.

Then mounted troops came into action. Sabres flashed, the flats of their blades resounded on the bodies of the mob; and eventually the crowds were scattered.

When the growl of the mob died down, in his cell Barataud's mouth relaxed into a sardonic grin.

## VII

### NEMESIS IN TEXAS

**W**RITERS of crime fiction, from Voltaire, Poe, Robert Louis Stevenson and Conan Doyle down to their current successors have in the main chosen as their detective heroes not the professional policeman but the amateur—the scientist, the cultured dilettante, the shrewd old lawyer, the newspaper reporter. Whatever the reason for this preference, I want to note here only that in real life an amateur detective would be laboring under the same handicap against the professional as the amateur in any other field of endeavor; broadly speaking, police are no more stupid than any other class of workers and they do specialize in hunting criminals.

But when in a crime story it is a newspaper reporter who beats the police to the solution of a mystery, fiction becomes most plausible in such a choice of amateur detective. For, by his very calling, the newspaper reporter daily is assigned to follow a clue to some fuller story as yet unknown to the public; often it is actually a murder mystery or some other

unsolved crime. At such times the reporter and his editors begin with all that the police can tell them; and in addition bring to the quest broader background and more versatile minds. At least this is what happened in the Payne mystery in Amarillo, Texas. And it is a story which if seen on the moving picture screen would be accepted by the mass of the uncritical as good "movie" and rejected by the sophisticated as untrue to life, too extreme in both subtlety and violence of psychology and of action.

Amarillo is a railroad center in the Panhandle of Texas, a town of nearly sixteen thousand inhabitants, with two newspapers, several hotels and ample police organization; a community that has outgrown the "wild west" instability of life which characterized the history of the Panhandle to recent days.

Arthur D. Payne, who claimed to be a direct descendant of the man who wrote "Home, Sweet Home" was one of Amarillo's leading lawyers. On the morning of June 27, 1930, he was standing on the porch of his semi-suburban, brick-and-stucco home, watching his wife, his ten-year-old daughter, Bobbie Jean, and his son, Arthur D., Junior, a boy of nine, as they were preparing to drive off in the family automobile. It was to be a shopping trip in a direction away from Payne's office, so he was not going with them. As usual he preferred to walk to his office. At the last moment Bobbie Jean decided that she wanted to walk with her father and

climbed out of the car; she would meet her mother later, it was arranged, after seeing her father to his office.

The parting made one of those commonplace domestic scenes that breathe of inner peace and health. Mrs. Payne at the wheel and the boy, as they drove off, turned and waved to the father and the little girl; Payne and his daughter waved back and, when the car was out of sight, left too.

At the door to his office Payne kissed Bobbie Jean and the two parted. Ten minutes later he was in the midst of dictating to his stenographer.

His telephone rang. A man's voice came over the wire, a stranger's.

"I'm terribly sorry, Mr. Payne," he was saying, "but I have bad news for you. Your automobile blew up on my beat—I'm Patrolman Brown—and I'm afraid your wife is dead. Your son, though, is still alive. You'd better come quick!" He told where.

The stenographer cried out: "Why, Mr. Payne, what's happened!"

For the man had dropped the receiver with a cry, and was running out of the office without hat or coat; he was gone before she could get an answer.

About a half mile from the Payne home a crowd was agonized over a shocking sight. Tangled in the ruins of a car that had been literally blown apart was the body of a woman. With her was a young boy, also badly torn, still breathing between cries of pain.



The woman was not only dead but unrecognizable. It was the boy who had told who they were.

When Payne arrived on the scene he grew hysterical at what he saw. It was fully a quarter of an hour before Patrolman Brown and two doctors, who had been summoned, got him at all quiet.

"Who saw it?" he demanded. "How did it happen?"

No one knew exactly what had happened, only that the car was going along at a moderate rate and had struck no obstacle at the moment when, without warning, an explosion tore it to pieces.

The boy was rushed off to the hospital. Emergency treatment saved his life but he would remain scarred and crippled.

Payne himself was put in the care of a doctor who dosed him with bromides for several days. Then he went to the police.

He asked, "How could my automobile blow up as it did? What have you found out?"

The police official told him the findings of the investigation they were conducting. "Mr. Payne, someone had placed a high explosive inside the car and a time-fuse set it off!"

"In God's name, who did it?" Payne cried.

The police official shook his head; he had not the slightest clue so far.

"But rest assured, Mr. Payne," he said, "we are not sleeping on the job. It's murder; a damned

heartless piece of work! And we and the district attorney's office will work overtime on the job!"

Payne's jaws were set and he clenched his fists.

"And there will be no sleep for me," he said, "until I face the murderer!" Then he broke down again. "My wife! My son! Who would want to do that to them!"

The police official had known Payne and his family and could think of no one who was their enemy. Payne belonged to fraternal orders. Mrs. Payne was popular with her neighbors, in her sewing circle, in her literary club and in her church society. The children too were liked by everyone.

The two newspapers in Amarillo are run and partly owned by Gene Howe, a dynamic, shrewd, crusading editor of the breed that is disappearing in this day of newspaper mergers. He took it almost as a personal affront, the fact that weeks passed since the Payne tragedy and the police had made not the slightest headway in the hunt for the murderer or motive.

Through his papers Howe offered five hundred dollars reward to spur on the hunt. In his own column in the *Amarillo Globe-News* he wrote semi-sardonically that unless the police showed results soon he would have himself appointed a special deputy to see what he could do with the case.

An hour after the editorial appeared, A. D. Payne entered Gene Howe's office.

"Mr. Howe," he said, "I sure do appreciate your interest. Especially the reward you offer. I haven't been of much help myself. But I will add five thousand dollars to your offer. And please call on me for anything else I can do to run down the fiend who killed my beloved wife and maimed my son!"

"I will, Mr. Payne!" Gene Howe said.

After Payne had left the office Gene Howe thought things over for a while. Then he got in touch by wire and long distance telephone with the *Kansas City Star* and asked for one of its reporters, A. B. Macdonald.

Macdonald is one of those rarities on a metropolitan newspaper, a man almost sixty years old who is in full career of strenuous reporting. Not only does his own paper pick him for its most arduous assignments; newspapers from other parts of the country appeal to him to come and accomplish feats that have proved too much for local police. For nearly forty years Macdonald almost singlehanded has exposed quacks, frauds and powerfully entrenched political machines. Above all he has made a name for himself for clearing up crime mysteries which baffled the police.

At Howe's invitation Macdonald came to Amarillo and the two newspaper men conferred in the office of the *Globe-News*.

"Now let's see where we stand," Macdonald said

when Howe had summed up all that he knew of the Payne mystery. "All we are sure of is that Mrs. Payne was murdered. Who stands to gain by her death?"

"Well," Howe said slowly, "when the insurance company pays up there will be \$10,000 coming to her husband."

"All right, what about him as her murderer?"

"That's the line the insurance company has followed. They've held up the payment of the policy pending their investigation. But it doesn't seem to be a promising hypothesis. All the testimony of friends, neighbors and acquaintances agree that Payne and his wife made a picture of marital happiness; holding hands in public; spending their evenings together; and so on. Also Payne was heavily insured in behalf of his wife and the children. I've studied the man and whatever else you may make me believe you couldn't convince me that Payne killed his wife for her insurance."

"How about another woman in the case?" Macdonald asked. "Either as the murderer or as the motive for Payne to get rid of his wife?"

"I don't know of any," said Howe. "Nor do the police. And Payne is too well known in Amarillo to carry on with any woman not his wife and get away without gossip. There hasn't been any."

"Well," Macdonald persisted, "Payne might be able to hide a clandestine love affair from his family

and his neighbors; but I'd like to question all the stenographers who have worked for him. So let's go up to his house and get from him a list of them."

The two newspaper men went to visit Payne. He received them cordially and seemed eager to help in every way he could. He did not resent Macdonald's frank questioning; and readily told him about the women who had been his secretaries.

"I've had several in the last year. My present one is Ocie Lee Humphries; you can find her at my office. At the time of my wife's death Mable Bush was working for me. She lives on Pierce Street and is keeping house for her brother. She is about nineteen, redheaded, full of vitality and very attractive. Look her up; she might help out your theory—I think I know what it is." He smiled wryly.

"Before her Verona Thompson worked for me. She is about twenty-five years old; a rather commonplace woman not particularly good-looking. She worked for me from August, a year ago, to December.

"Her predecessor was Vera Holcomb, who was with me only a short time and I can't tell you where she is now. . . . Anything else you'd like to know, Mr. Macdonald?"

"No thanks," Macdonald said. "Not for the present."

The reporter got to work on the list Payne gave him.

Ocie Lee Humphries could tell him nothing. Mable Bush was as attractive as Payne had described her; but Macdonald had to admit to himself that she did not help out his theory.

The reporter then looked up Verona Thompson, the woman of whom Payne had said she was "rather commonplace and not particularly good-looking."

Macdonald did find her rather commonplace; but decidedly she was better looking than Payne had led him to believe. She was shapely, smartly dressed, and had pretty eyes. Also she seemed nobody's fool. With renewed hope the reporter went at her with questions.

Bluntly he asked her if she ever went out to lunch with Payne.

"Often," she replied quietly.

"Did you ever take automobile trips with him?"

"Many times. To—." She named surrounding towns in the Panhandle. Then she said, "Mr. Macdonald, you are not the first to question me. Detectives have been at me and the insurance men have asked me about my relations with Mr. Payne. Yes, I lunched with him and I went on trips with him. He talked only of work when we lunched; and it was only on business trips that I went in his automobile. I was his stenographer. I don't see how that proves our relations were improper; or that either of us killed Mrs. Payne."

Macdonald rose and towered over her. The

veteran investigator was bringing into play all his accumulated shrewdness in dealing with suspects.

"Miss Thompson," he said sternly, "you don't know me; but any editor and the police of half a hundred cities will tell you that I'm not a novice at my game. I've been working on this case for over a week and I know more than you've told me. I know, for instance, that you've been seeing Payne *since you quit working for him; that you've been off on trips with him that have nothing to do with business; and I know other things. Take my word for it you are in deeper trouble than you dream. Now. Do you want to go behind bars and fight? Or do you want to help us? I will tell you only one thing to help you decide. Payne is under arrest for the murder of his wife!*"

He knew none of these things of course.

For some moments the girl confronted the reporter's attack. Then her eyes wavered, she covered her face with her hands and dropped into a chair. She began to tremble and to weep.

"Oh, my God, this is terrible! Do you suppose he really killed her?"

"Our only doubt," Macdonald said, "is how free of the murder are you!"

At that she broke down completely and sobbed out her confession. She had been seeing Payne clandestinely. She loved him. He told her that he loved her; that he wanted to marry her; that he would

divorce his wife, leave his children provided for, go away with her and start life all over again.

She had been with him since his wife's death; and although he told her he had nothing to do with the murder, he had said to her repeatedly and with vehemence,

"Our lives, yours and mine, depend on your silence. If it is ever found out that we love each other and have been together, I don't know what will become of us."

She was hysterical by now. Macdonald calmed her. Later he convinced her that she had better cooperate with him and the police.

Macdonald then went to see Gene Howe and the two consulted. Macdonald said, "It's only a gamble of course, but let's arrest Payne."

"I'll say it's a gamble," Howe replied. "He's a shrewd lawyer and we can count on his making the most out of a false arrest. There will be heavy damages to pay if we can't make our bluff good!"

"I'll tell you my scheme and you can decide if you want to take the risk," Macdonald said.

The scheme was so good but the risks were so heavy that Gene Howe felt constrained to call into conference with them the mayor of Amarillo, Ernest O. Thompson, a wealthy, spirited young business man.

Thompson considered gravely what Macdonald had to say. Then he decided.



"I'll stand responsible for any damage suits Payne will bring," he said.

He took up the telephone and gave instructions to several police officials and the district attorney.

It was evening and the detectives were sent to arrest Payne at his home.

Others were instructed to go to the lawyer's office, break in and search it.

Half an hour later Payne was brought into the room in the city prison where Mayor Thompson, Gene Howe and Macdonald were waiting for him.

Payne was a tall, strongly built man with a wide forehead, dark eyes, full and direct in their look; his nose and mouth were straight and strong, his chin and jaws square. For the first time the men in the room saw how deadly his eyes could look.

"Well, gentlemen," he said, "I hope you know what you are doing."

Mayor Thompson asked one of the detectives who had brought Payne, "You've searched him, Joe?"

"Yes, sir," the detective replied. "Here is all he had in his pockets."

"Then take him down to the 'cooler'!" the mayor said. "Through that room."

Mayor Thompson, and the two newspaper men followed the arrested man and the detectives into the next room.

Here Payne saw Verona Thompson writing

what was obviously a confession. Standing over her was the district attorney.

Payne grew even more haggard in look than when he arrived; but he lost little of his self-possession. He turned to the mayor with an acid smile.

He said, "I suppose this is where I'm expected to break down and confess—!"

A little laugh, not pleasant to hear, was his comment on the situation.

Mayor Thompson took out of his pocket two envelopes.

He said, "Suit yourself, Payne, about confessing. But take a look at these two envelopes we found in your office."

He held them so that Payne could see. Each envelope bore an uncanceled stamp and was addressed, one to the chief of police of Amarillo, the other to the sheriff.

Mayor Thompson then took out their contents. The two letters were identical in wording and in handwriting.

The writer described himself as a burglar. On the night before Mrs. Payne's death he parked his automobile near a house where he was to get three sticks of dynamite, for a burglary the following evening.

When he came out of the house, the letter continued, he went to an automobile and opening a compartment door for packages he put the dynamite

sticks inside. Then he went back into the house and came out again half an hour later.

The letter went on to say that when he got home and looked for the dynamite in his car he was astonished to find it gone. He must have made a mistake in stowing away the explosives, he decided, in one of several other cars of the same make parked near his.

Now he knew, the letter concluded, that his mistake had caused the Payne tragedy. He was sending these letters anonymously. He didn't want to go to prison. But conscience had prompted him to write a confession.

Mayor Thompson put the letters back into their envelopes. "Payne," he said, "send me word when you are ready to talk."

There was no smile on Payne's face now as he left with the detectives.

He was taken down to what was known in the prison as the "cooler," an isolation cell walled in iron. He could not even see the guard who was pacing up and down the corridor outside his door.

Even a child could foresee what the "burglar's" letters would do to the case against Payne. He could claim of course that they were "planted" in his office; but it would be a hopeless effort.

A whole night Payne pondered in his cell. There was hidden violence in the man's character but for hours he kept it under control. His mind worked

keenly in search of some loophole in the case against him. Then his nerves began to clamor and he looked for a way out of his cell.

The pacing of the invisible guard outside the iron door must have sounded like the tramp of approaching doom. The violence in Payne was now no longer hidden and he expended it hysterically on the walls of his cell; but flesh and blood could do nothing against sheet-iron.

Exhausted finally he went to the door and called for the guard.

"I want to speak to Mayor Thompson," he said.

The Mayor came with his aides. They found Payne a changed man. It was as if he had gone through purgatorial fires which had not softened the iron in the man; indeed, he looked sterner than when he entered. But now all his hardness seemed turned against himself, as if he were a duality, both a judge and a guilty man, a nemesis and its victim in one.

"I will confess in full," he said. "I will not spare myself and I will not ask to be spared. What I have been and what I have done can be expiated only by death. I want nothing but punishment."

The confession he wrote came to nearly 60,000 words and made a brutal story.

His love for Verona Thompson had determined him to get rid of his wife.

He began by trying to poison Mrs. Payne. "But

I didn't know enough about drugs to do a good job," he wrote. "So I abandoned the plan when a little strychnine did not cause her death."

Next he tried to asphyxiate her. One night while she was asleep he turned on the gas. But before the room could fill sufficiently she awoke, violently ill, and her cries put an end to that attempt.

He then decided to take her out driving and kill her by sending the car over a cliff, after he had jumped out. In private he rehearsed what he would do; but the risk to himself was so great that he lost his nerve and changed his plan.

In the Payne home there was a small store room, little more than a large closet on the shelves of which lay a miscellany of objects. Payne loaded a shotgun and so placed it that the muzzle pointed at the door. Then he tied a string to the trigger and to the inside door knob.

He asked his wife to get him something out of the closet. Unsuspecting she opened the door. There was a report and Mrs. Payne fell back, screaming. She was bleeding when Payne rushed over to her, pretending concern.

It was only her arm, however, that was wounded. Payne told at the time a plausible story of a loaded gun being jarred off a shelf in the store room when his wife opened the door.

He waited a month before trying again. This time he chose once more his automobile as his in-

strument. He placed dynamite sticks, fuses and a lighting device inside the car. The fact that but for accident his two children would have shared his wife's fate, Payne said, in his confession, did not at the time seem to move him in the least.

The confession was made public and newspapers all over the world printed it.

In Amarillo the cruelty of the murder agitated even the most pacific of its citizens. Under the stress of public emotion there awoke in Amarillo memories of border violence. A mob gathered around the city jail and demanded that Payne be handed over to them.

The authorities had foreseen this. While the mob was clamoring in front of the jail, Payne was smuggled through a back door and hurried off to a stronger jail in a neighboring city.

When mob passion abated, under the persuasion of Mayor Thompson and a strongly reinforced armed guard about the jail, Payne was brought back.

Here he awaited trial. He refused to plead insanity or in any way mitigate his confession.

But he told a fellow prisoner,

"I'm not going to the electric chair!"

The man to whom he said this thought the speech was only bravado.

The next day, however, Payne developed a sudden and surprising temper. He found fault with one

of his keepers and through the bars struck him.

The punishment for such a thing, as he well knew, was solitary confinement in an isolated part of the prison.

Payne was taken down into the "cooler" where he had spent his first night in prison.

At the time of his arrest when Payne was searched the detectives went only through his pockets. As it later developed, had they looked under his right trouser leg they would have found a small bottle of explosive fastened to his calf with adhesive tape.

Now that he was in solitary confinement with no one to see what he was doing, he took out the bottle. Through the cork he worked a fuse.

As will be seen he had planned for his attempt not only a definite place but also a certain day.

The date was August 29th. On that day a clause in the insurance policy on his life would become operative. Payne could now kill himself without jeopardizing the ten thousand dollars the company would have to pay his children at his death.

He lay listening to the steps of the guard outside his cell. He waited until he knew that the man was at the other end of the corridor.

Then Payne put the bottle of explosive on his cot and lay down with it. He lit a cigarette, puffed at it; touched with the burning tip the end of the fuse, and waited.

The explosion blew out the walls of the iron cell but harmed no one but Payne. The man who once had been shocking with cruelty had carefully contrived to be the only one to die.

At his burial a wish he had expressed was carried out, and furnished an unintended but savage touch of irony to Payne's story. Proud to the last of his distinguished ancestor, the composer of an undying song, Payne, the murderer, had asked that at the funeral, "Home, Sweet Home," be played. And it was.



## VIII

### THE MYSTERY OF CHUNG YIA MAIO

**I**F a mystery is the more challenging when it is simple in outline, familiar in setting and modern in atmosphere, then it is quite understandable why Scotland Yard should have felt so intrigued by the case of Chung Yi Maio. Naïve detective stories would have it that Scotland Yard always solves its mysteries, especially the simple ones; the fact in the case of Chung Yi Maio smites this fiction a severe blow. Then, as if to make up for that hurt to storybook naïveté this strange case seems to corroborate a still more simple belief that the Chinese are a more mysterious race than any other, that they excel in "ways that are dark," and that even in such fundamentals as love, life and death they differ inscrutably from the way in which other human beings feel about these things.

Chung Yi Maio was the son of a wealthy Peking merchant who wanted his only child to escape the chaos and civil war that has racked the Chinese

nation for a quarter of a century and more. In the course of these upheavals Chung Yi Maio's father lost his wife and most of his kin and suffered so much that he finally converted what was left of his business into ready cash, willed it all to his son and committed suicide.

Chung Yi Maio was a slightly built youth, but surprisingly strong for his size. He had a warm emotional nature but his smooth simply modelled face was hard to read. He was sensitively constituted but he could endure hardship like a savage. Above all, he could endure it in the service of his loyalties.

Carrying out the dead man's wish Chung Yi Maio made a complete break with the past, left China, came to America, joined a Christian church and took up the study of law at the University of Chicago.

Like most transplanted Orientals Chung Yi Maio looked well in American dress and in his case the clothes seemed to express the complete change in the man. After a period of mourning for his father the son found life again a thing to enjoy, life in this vital new world of America. At the University of Chicago he joined in the athletics, fraternity life, dances and attachments which to so many Americans form the memories of "bright college years".

In the spring of 1928 Chung Yi Maio, or as he preferred to be called now simply Maio, came to New York for a visit to some friends studying at

Columbia University. At a dance in the International House, the big dormitory where students of more than half a hundred races and nationalities live in cosmopolitan community, Maio met an exceptionally pretty young woman from his homeland, Wai Shung Siu.

She was the belle of a circle of Chinese students, not only because of her looks and sweetness of nature but also because beneath the charm of her there was the firm texture of character and competence.

Shung Siu, her father, was formerly a rich merchant in the province of Kwang-Tung and dealt in jewelry and precious stones. In China in this troublous era such a trade is precarious; and Shung Siu, a shrewd and ruthless tradesman, found so much capital on his hands that he decided to transfer most of it abroad. It was his daughter who took charge for him of this "flight of capital".

So young was she when her father sent her abroad and so widely had she travelled that in mind and spirit she became more western than Oriental. She knew England well and loved its country; she knew America well and imbibed much that is likable of its spirit.

When her father died several years ago she wound up his business affairs. Most of his fortune she disposed among her many sisters and brothers in China, but left herself sufficient to inure her eco-

conomic ease for the rest of her life. She made a will whereby at her death everything she had was to go to her relatives in China. Then she came to New York to study; and met Chung Yi Maio.

The two fell in love and became engaged. Their exchanges of confidences were full, warm and generous. She never had any secrets to hide from him. Nor he from her—in the beginning.

The change came after Chung Yi Maio began visiting New York's Chinatown. As a lawyer he was consulted by some of the local Chinese merchants. He saw them more and more often; and at first he told the woman he loved all about his new clients.

Then he told her less; and saw more of his Chinatown associates. She teased him at first about the fact and accused him of being mysterious in his increasing reticence toward her. He pleaded that his clients had the right to have their professional secrets remain secrets even from their counsellor's fiancée.

She was reasonable about it all; but soon she began to worry. Maio began to look so abstracted, so troubled, remained so secret about his Chinatown associations that finally she remonstrated.

"Something has come between us," she said. "I haven't the remotest idea what it is all about and you don't seem to want to tell me. Whatever it is, it stands between us. Before it is too late I will marry you, if you are willing to marry me within a

month. Then you and I leave this country at once. Otherwise I go alone. Which is it to be?"

She described the scene later to her most intimate friends.

"Chung seemed to be making a life-or-death decision. Finally he said, 'We will marry and go away—at once! But I am in a difficult position; I am running away from some of my—business responsibilities. You will indulge me then if I keep our travelling plans a secret—not only from my business associates but also from all our friends.' "

She thought that fair. They were married last May in an Episcopal church in New York without any secrecy whatsoever. In fact a small delegation of Maio's business associates from Chinatown were present and looked gravely on.

Then Chung and his wife went to Chicago for the first part of their honeymoon. He told everybody that from there they would go by plane to San Francisco; then by steamer to China; there they would stay for some time with relatives; and would return to America by way of Europe.

In Chicago he did engage a plane to take them to San Francisco and they were to leave in the morning. But in the middle of the night Maio woke his wife and bundling her into her clothes he hurried her down to a waiting automobile where their baggage was already waiting.

Instead of going to the airport Maio himself

drove the car to Gary. There the couple caught a train and went to Montreal, where they took a steamer for Scotland.

Later Mrs. Maio wrote to a friend that on the steamer her husband seemed for the first time in months a carefree man. He behaved as if he had awakened from a bad dream. He appeared now exceptionally light-hearted and he was the perfect lover, happy, tender, full of hope.

When the steamer landed at Glasgow, however, Mrs. Maio noticed that he turned pale at the sight of two Chinamen on the dock who gave them a passing scrutiny. He said nothing about them to his wife but the incident seemed to bring back the cloud over his spirit.

In Glasgow Mrs. Maio made every effort to cheer up her husband. It occurred to her that perhaps what was troubling him was the question of economics.

"It is an accident," she said to him, "that I have more money than you. If you had more I know you would want me to share it with you. Since it is I who happen to have more, I want you to share with me. Everything mine is yours."

As an earnest of the way she felt she changed one of her travelling checks for \$10,000 so that either she or Maio could use the money.

Then they went on to the English lake country, which she was anxious to show off to her husband.

They stopped at the Borrowdale Gates Hotel, four miles from the town of Keswick.

Everybody at the hotel and in the neighborhood became interested in the handsome young Chinese honeymooners, obviously rich and so in love with one another. Even a lovers' quarrel seemed out of the question between them. The bridegroom, however, seemed to have much on his mind. Mrs. Maio explained to sympathetic inquirers that her husband had caught a bad cold. No doubt he was suffering from a cold.

But that did not keep the couple from taking long tramps in nearby country and around the less frequented lakes.

On the afternoon of June 18 at about two in the afternoon they left the hotel for one of their walks.

At five o'clock Chung Yi Maio came back to the hotel alone. The hotel clerk asked him where his wife was.

"She went on to Keswick to do some shopping," Maio said. "My cold is so bad that she told me to go to bed."

He went up to his room. The hotel clerk expected Mrs. Maio to return soon. Keswick was only a few miles away and the rich bride would be sure to hire an automobile and hurry back to her ailing husband.

Supper time came but Mrs. Maio had not yet returned. Her husband was still in his room.

Eight o'clock came and the hotel clerk became uneasy. He went up and knocking at the Maio's door asked if they had not better send a car to town to find Mrs. Maio.

"No, don't worry," Maio replied. "My wife can take care of herself."

Meanwhile a farmer who was working near the shore of Lake Derwentwater, had been puzzled all afternoon by something he saw. On a bit of beach by the lake an open umbrella was so placed that from the land side could be seen only the edge of a fur coat and a pair of small daintily shod feet, a woman's.

What attracted the farmer's attention was the fact that in the several hours since he first noticed those feet they had not once moved.

Finally, as the dark was coming on, he decided to take a closer look.

What he saw sent him on a run for the nearest telephone. A police inspector came hurrying on a motorcycle and examined what was behind the open umbrella.

Mrs. Maio, fully dressed, was sitting up, propped up by the bank, dead. About her throat, tightly drawn, was a noose of plaited string and picture wire.

The police inspector had no difficulty in find-



ing out who the dead woman was; the whole countryside knew of the Maio.

The inspector went to the Borrowdale Gates Hotel and asked for Maio.

"He's up in his room," the clerk told him.

The inspector went up, knocked at Maio's door and was admitted by Maio himself. The young Chinaman was in his pajamas and seemed dazed either with sleep or illness.

The inspector gravely informed him that his wife had been found strangled and that he had come to arrest Maio for the murder.

Maio behaved like a man groping in the mazes of semi-consciousness. Finally he dressed and submitted to arrest.

To the lawyer Maio engaged he repeated monotonously,

"I don't know anything about my wife's murder. I loved her. I still love her. I had nothing to gain by her death. Her fortune goes to her relatives. Why should I have killed her?"

And that was the story he repeated on the stand at his trial before a jury of stolid Cumberland farmers and small tradesmen.

The prosecution in its search for a motive for the killing tried to make it a case of murder for the dead woman's wealth. Maio's lawyer had no difficulty in proving that Mrs. Maio had in Glasgow of her own accord changed a traveller's check for

\$10,000 so that her husband could make full use of the money; and that on other occasions she showed the same generosity toward him.

Her will was produced to show that at her death her fortune would go not to her husband but to her family in China. Also it was easily proved that the will was further amended to that effect not only with Maio's full knowledge but with his help.

The prosecution's theory that Maio had killed his wife for material gain did not convince even the simplest minds on the jury. But neither did the defense convince them. Mrs. Maio had been murdered after the two had left the hotel together. Her husband had returned alone. He behaved queerly about her continued absence. There was no other at whom to point the finger of suspicion.

"Guilty!" was the jury's verdict.

To the very end Maio protested his innocence. Nevertheless, at Strangeways Jail in Manchester last fall, Chung Yi Maio was hanged.

Legally, since a jury had found Maio guilty, he was the murderer; and technically there was no mystery in the case. But Scotland Yard felt challenged. Verdict or no verdict some of the best men there tried to answer the unsettled question, who murdered Mrs. Maio and why.

But up to now theories and a rumor from New York's Chinatown have been the only approaches to a solution of the mystery.

*The theories range from the official one of greed to vague speculations as to some bitter quarrel between the Maios.*

The rumor from Chinatown was that Chung Yi Maio had become involved in some tong or secret Chinese society. Some of its most powerful members, the story went, had carried over a feud, a bitter one, from China to America. Shung Siu, Maio's father-in-law, had made business enemies in Kwang-Tung. Murderous hatred developed, calling for blood-feud against the Shung Siu line to the remotest kin.

Shung Siu could not be reached, for he died without the instrumentality of his enemies. But there in America was his daughter, his favorite child, the chief beneficiary of his plunderings, as his enemies saw it. Shung Siu had died triumphant; but though dead he would see what vengeance his enemies could still carry out.

They had business associates in America; some of them were powers in the tong to which Chung Yi Maio belonged. As a member he was committed to obey the decisions of the tong, no matter what or at what cost.

According to this rumored story from New York's Chinatown, Chung Yi Maio was held by the tong to his oath and commanded to be an instrument in the execution of Wai Shung Siu.

Maio tried to escape his grisly fate. He pleaded

with his tong but in vain. Then he pretended to yield to the inexorable. He told his tong that he would carry out their decree on his honeymoon, on the way to China.

In Chicago he hired an airplane for San Francisco, as we have seen; but fled instead by way of the Atlantic. At Glasgow, however, emissaries of the tong showed him that for him escape was hopeless. His only choice was, whether he would be himself his wife's executioner or let others of the tong kill her.

In support of this melodramatic version it was proved at Maio's trial that on the afternoon of the murder two Chinamen were seen in the neighborhood of the lake where Mrs. Maio's body was found; and that they left Keswick that evening.

Maio himself, on the witness stand, suggested that his wife may have been murdered by these prowlers. But no valuables had been missed by him. Nor did he offer any suggestion as to the motive of the murder.

And thus the matter stands today, a mystery not even Scotland Yard has solved.

IX

THE DRUDGE  
WHO TURNED BANDIT

**T**HE story of Irene Shrader, at least in the brief fiery phase that startled the world, is rapid-fire mounting melodrama, more fit for the moving picture screen than for laboratory analysis; yet repeatedly I find myself thinking of it in terms of chemical forces. Take two substances, A and B; mix each one of them with any of a hundred chemicals, and the mixture remains inert. Then perhaps by chance A and B come together. Instantly terrific heat develops and unless there is good outlet for the expansive force of the union, there is explosion. Let us see how closely the story of Irene Shrader and Glenn Dague follows this phenomenon.

Irene Crawford was one of fourteen children born and brought up in a squatter's shack half way up a mountain in West Virginia. When she was nine she lost her mother. She was not allowed to go to the funeral because she had to stay home to mind five younger children who could not walk to the burial.

It was not ambition but sheer lack of room and food that forced the children one by one out into the world. The luckier ones, two older sisters of Irene, married men who needed household drudges. The boys in the main became vagrants, only one of them, Ed, achieving public notice. He stole an automobile in St. Louis, was arrested and sent to prison, escaped and in a revolver fight with a policeman was shot dead.

Irene's life, until it flared up before the eyes of the world, was in drab obscurity. From her squatter home she went, at the age of fifteen, to live with a married sister in another shack by a railroad siding in Wheeling, West Virginia.

An unskilled laborer, Tom Shrader, wishing a home of his own asked Irene to marry him. She did so not out of love but because there was no longer room for her in her sister's house. Then at sixteen she gave birth to a boy, Donnie.

When Donnie was two years old the loveless marriage broke up; not because it was loveless but because Shrader could not support even the child. When the Shraders separated Irene took Donnie.

She had never had a childhood of her own and in Donnie she was having one vicariously. But she saw little of him because she had to spend from twelve to fourteen hours a day as a cleaner in railroad coaches. At the age of twenty she was still a

drudge, waitress in a restaurant near the freight yards.

Donnie was by now a healthy youngster with an engaging smile and full of play. Irene was a short heavy-muscled young woman; in body a typical drudge; and apparently with a drudge's unlimited submission to life. There was surliness in the sidelong look of her brooding grey eyes; but until late in her story those eyes never showed fire. Her jaws were square and heavy but she looked only bovine.

She had known nothing in her life to strike fire in her. Several times revolt smoldered up in her against the drab drudgery of her existence. She considered suicide but had not the heart to leave Donnie alone. For the same reason she stayed within the law when she was tempted to get money more easily than by drudgery; the thought of herself in prison with Donnie deserted was a deterrent.

Sex meant little to her because she had never met a man who roused her. Romance was something to be found only in books. Out of hunger for it she had picked up reading and somehow between drudgery and taking care of Donnie she had managed to find time for books from a public library, the stories of Dumas, Balzac and other masters of colorful romance. But color and life, Irene assumed, had nothing to do with one another; foolish even to dream of wanting color in life.

Up to her emergence therefore as a newspaper sensation, Irene Shrader, except for her labor, was humanly as negligible a force as chemically are most of the substances in a pile of waste.

All this time there was Glenn Dague, whose life was not so squalid as Irene's but almost as drab. The child of a small town preacher in Sand Hill, West Virginia, Glenn was brought up in fear of a stern father and a sterner God. He was an obedient boy because he feared his father's heavy hand and the wrath of a God who punished with hell fire those who did not obey parents and laws. Dutifully he attended Sunday school and Boy Scout meetings.

When he became a young man he in turn taught Sunday school and led a troop of Boy Scouts. He fell mildly in love with a school teacher, married her, had two children and settled down to a humdrum existence in another small town, Viola, Pennsylvania. Here he made a meagre living as an insurance agent. He made a little more when he went to work as an automobile salesman in Wheeling, while his family remained in Viola.

But until he was thirty life for him was still a colorless business. He was well-built and good-looking, with curly light brown hair above a good forehead, deepset blue eyes, a straight nose, mustaches, firm well-modeled mouth and jaws. He could sing agreeably and a hint of it was in his speaking voice. Yet notwithstanding all this he attracted few



women and was himself seldom attracted; there was no lift to his spirits; the atmosphere of too much church upbringing chilled any encounter between him and women.

Then one day in Wheeling, as he was driving for his agency, his car grazed a woman and he stopped to apologize. The strangers looked at each other—and in each other two commonplace human beings discovered a miracle.

Dague took Irene Shrader to the restaurant where she worked; and after that came there to eat.

The two became lovers. But theirs was not the light affair of a wayside meeting. Dague told Irene at once all about his family in Viola. He told it as part of his outpourings to her, one of his ways of giving himself to her. Then he said he wanted to leave his family and marry her.

Irene wrote later the story of her life, a crude narrative. In it she told things of herself that make her whole account credible; no woman who says, for instance, that she and her lover “never did have much nerve,” even though that could not have been true, and who admits having been a prostitute, can be well accused of trying to prettify her character.

In describing the scene in which Glenn Dague told her of his family, she wrote: “He didn’t say anything against his wife and he told me about his two children, Delmar and Marlys. I saw at once that he mustn’t lose all this. So when he asked me if I

loved him I sort of laughed and said, 'I love all the boys'.

"He wanted to know, 'Do you mean I'm not the only one?'"

"I let him think what he pleased."

He refused to believe that she was promiscuous. Her journal goes on: "So I saw what had to be done and I did it. The next time he came back to my part of town he could ask anyone in the neighborhood if Irene at the café wasn't getting money from the men and he would be told yes."

But he guessed why she did it and it only determined him the more. He left his family, his job, respectability, everything to join Irene.

Thereupon Irene ran away with a railroad hand by the name of Davis, who was willing to put up with a mistress although she frankly told him she cared nothing about him. Resisting Dague's pleadings Irene continued to live on with Davis—even though she knew she was pregnant by Dague.

The child was born dead. That finished the struggle for Irene. The added bond, their loss in common, drew Irene back to Dague. The two were joined now with the tenacity of affinitive forces.

Their union generated in him a fierce energy which he tried to harness in making a living for Irene and Donnie. He tried in turn selling washing machines, toothpaste, silk stockings, anything. He tried factory work, ditch digging, any kind of la-

bor. But so little money did each effort bring him that his very impatience to make more money defeated him.

One day, while working for a tree "doctor," he fell from a forty-foot ladder, was laid up for weeks and thereby lost his job. Irene took care of him, tried to look after Donnie, did their housework and at the same time had to look around for some way to earn money. The day came when there was not even food left in the house.

Irene saw Dague writhing with physical pain and with anguish.

She put on her coat and was about to leave.

"Where are you going?" he demanded.

"To get some money," she said, avoiding his eyes.

"Where? How will you get it?" But he guessed that what she had done once to make him think she was promiscuous, she now meant to do in order to get food for them.

He brought his fist down on a small table with such force that the top broke.

"This is the end!" he cried. "God's curse is on us! He will not help me get bread for you and the boy honestly. Very well, I'll go out and take it by force!"

Irene stepped up to him, seized his hands and brought her face close to his.

"I'll go with you, Glenn!" she said.

They made a bundle of all the clothes they could gather and in one pawn shop they got some money for it. They went to another and told the pawnbroker they wanted two second-hand revolvers; their story was that they wanted them for self-protection on an isolated farm.

The pawnbroker said, "What sort of revolvers do you expect for six dollars, two of them? Why don't you buy one good one instead?"

They insisted on two. So he let them have one ornate Spanish revolver of inferior make and another, a battered army pistol. "But don't blame me if they don't work," he warned them.

Irene took the Spanish revolver, Dague the other.

In a sporting goods store they bought some bullets.

They walked out into the suburbs until they came to a small garage. The owner, a short middle-aged man, was the only one in sight.

Dague had insisted that Irene was to stay outside while he was in the garage; but at the last moment she disregarded this and entered with him.

When the two took out their revolvers and ordered the garage keeper to put up his hands, it was a question, according to Irene's account, who was the more frightened, they or the garage man. It was Dague's first blow in revolt not only against society but against God. Irene's whole fear was fo-

cused on how the revolvers would behave if it came to shooting. The garage man "was so weak from scare that he couldn't put his hands up high, but we saw he was stiff with fright and didn't make him put them up higher"

Their robbery yielded them a shabby Chevrolet and eleven dollars. Dague took the wheel and they drove to some woods.

Here Irene insisted on trying out the revolvers they had bought. Dague tried his first, Irene watching.

"Why don't you shoot?" she asked.

"I did," he said. "Five times, but it won't go off!"

Irene then tried her Spanish revolver. It worked as soon as she pulled the trigger, but with such force that it "kicked" out of her hand.

They drove back to the pawnbroker who had sold them the useless weapons and with the proceeds of their first robbery they bought two other second-hand revolvers, which, as it turned out, would work only too well.

Then they drove to their home and dressed Donnie. He was delighted at the prospect of what he called a "motobile ride".

They put into the car also a small bundle that comprised the rest of all they owned.

They drove to Butler, Pennsylvania, and stopped outside a grocery store. They left the motor

running and Irene told Donnie to wait for them in the car. Knowing also how restless he was to examine their new acquisition she begged him "not to touch".

They had selected the grocery because only a clerk was on duty. He was a smooth-shaven, intelligent-looking man in his early thirties. Irene asked for a quart of milk, several cans of soup, a loaf of bread. The clerk made a bundle of the order and waited for payment.

Irene and Dague exchanged a look and simultaneously took out their revolvers. It was Irene who said, "Hold your hands above your head and beat it into the back room!"

The clerk was working for a big grocery chain whose branch stores had known previous robberies. Also he had been in the war. He knew enough now to do the sensible thing in view of the two revolvers. He obeyed Irene and went into the back room where Dague bound and gagged him.

Dague went to the cash register and took all there was, some forty dollars. Then he and Irene went out to their car. It was only when Dague had driven far along Butler Pike that Irene drew a full breath.

What had kept her anxious was the fear while they were in the store that Donnie would disregard her and do something to the running motor.

In Dague's mind was an anxiety to get to New

Castle safely. "Once there," he said to Irene, "I'll know we've left them behind."

He was driving at about twenty-five miles an hour, partly because he wanted to avoid a show of hurry, also because the car could not do much better.

Back in the grocery the clerk, Will Angert, though gagged and bound could hear. And he recognized in the sound of the departing automobile what he later described as, "the Chevrolet hum."

When a quarter of an hour later a customer came in and freed him, Angert snatched up the telephone, called up the police and told his story.

Several days prior to this there had been installed in over a hundred stations of the Pennsylvania state police a machine called the "teletype." Five minutes after Angert had telephoned this machine was clicking out in every state police station Angert's description of the holdup.

Still on Butler Pike, Dague was driving along with enforced leisure, Irene by his side with Donnie between them. Then ahead of them they saw two highway patrolmen, obviously about to stop them.

While Dague had been courting Irene he had taught her to drive a car until she found herself at ease in any of the well-known makes of American automobiles. Now he said softly, hoping Donnie would not hear,

"If they bother us, I'll get out and talk to

them. If they try to keep me—understand, Irene?—you grab the wheel, and off you go! You *do* understand, don't you?"

Whether she understood or not, Irene said nothing.

Dague stopped the car when it came up to the policemen.

One of them, Brady Paul, opened the door by the side of Dague and said with a casual air,

"Let's see your license, buddy."

Slowly Dague took out a leather wallet and handed it to Paul. Irene saw the patrolman hold it in such a way that it hid from Dague the sight of his hand reaching for his pistol holster. Suddenly Paul's revolver was out and he snapped,

"Climb into the back, the three of you! Cover them, Ernie! I'll take the wheel."

Instead of obeying, Dague pretended indignation and got out of the car to the road. "What's the idea—?" he began.

He expected Irene to seize the wheel and drive off.

Donnie began to cry. "Mother, don't let them hurt Glenn!"

Even Dague was unprepared for what followed. Instead of taking the wheel Irene whipped out her revolver, and savagely began shooting. Then Dague joined in with his own revolver, and the two patrolmen returned fire.



Brady Paul went down, dead. The other patrolman, Ernest Moore, fell wounded.

Dague leaped into the car, took the wheel, gave the motor all the gas it could stand, and away fled the Chevrolet.

Irene's attention was on Donnie. At the first shot she heard him scream.

She wrote later, "I thought he was hit. I just sprawled all over Donnie, feeling him for signs of blood. I cried, 'Are you hurt, Donnie?' It was heaven to hear him say no and to feel his arms and legs move all right."

The union of the "hash house" waitress and the former Sunday school teacher had been denied a social outlet; now explosion had come; and the shooting on Butler Pike was only the beginning.

Guessing that the police were on the lookout for a Chevrolet, Dague and Irene knew that they must now, as Irene grimly put it, "change cars."

They saw a Chrysler sedan coming toward them, shining new, bright blue with wheels of polished aluminum. Dague swung the Chevrolet across its path and forced it to stop. He got out of his car, followed by Irene and Donnie. Dague took out his revolver, opened the door of the Chrysler and ordered the occupants out. A frightened young couple obeyed. Irene called to them.

"You're welcome to the Chevrolet!"

The drudge who had borne life with stolidity,

or in her rebellious moods with bitterness, now felt a sort of grim ironic gaiety, now that she was irreparably launched on high adventure, such as she had never dreamed life could hold for her.

Donnie was pleased with his new car.

Dague drove it tragically intent on the road ahead.

It was Irene who did the thinking for them. For hers now was the cool mind and the purified will that was to lead thereafter. Dague was a good soldier; but she was in command.

Knowing that the alarm was out for a man, a woman and a child, Irene made Dague stop the car when they came up to two "hitch hikers"—men. Cordially Irene invited them to ride. The men accepted. Irene told one of them to sit with Dague in the front seat, while she got in the back with the other. Donnie obliged his mother by going "sleepy bye-bye" on the floor of the car. Now those who met the Chrysler, if they at all noticed the occupants, saw three men and a woman.

But Irene knew that it would not be long before the hunt would be for a bright blue Chrysler with aluminum wheels. So at Steubenville she dropped the two men and a little further on the Chrysler was abandoned.

All over Pennsylvania and the bordering states telephone and telegraph wires, radio-stations and newspapers were broadcasting the latest phases of

the hunt for the murderers of Brady Paul. And dodging and twisting through all this clamor of pursuit Irene guided her man and her child.

They stole a car of another make. South along the backroads of Pennsylvania they drove. Whenever they needed oil and gasoline they got them at some small isolated filling station, sometimes paying, more often not.

When they needed food they stopped before some small-town grocery; studied it for a quarter of an hour; then Dague and Irene entered and got milk, bread, smoked meat, canned goods, or whatever could be gathered up in a quick holdup. Sometimes Irene even thought of what Donnie might like, apples or candy, and gambled precious moments to get them.

Even under the tension of her twofold peril, hunted as she was and robbing as she went, Irene worried as to the effect on Donnie of what he was witnessing. He must have seen over forty hold-ups by his mother and "Daddie Glenn." He was in seven automobile races; and learned to obey instantly his mother's, "Duck, Donnie!" He was excited to the point of hysteria. That, of course, could not be helped. But what were his mother and Dague to him now? Heroes of each hold-up, victors in thrilling races? Or monsters who had shot down two policemen?

Irene settled the question by buying for

Donnie a small cap pistol. She said as she presented it to him, "Now, darling, you too can play!"

Thereafter Donnie was in glee; it was all a game and nothing to be frightened at; his mother and "Daddie Glenn" were doing it all to amuse him.

At first Donnie's presence in a car was an asset to the couple. Who could dream that the parents of so winsome a youngster were about to take out revolvers?

But before long too many alarms were out for a couple with a child.

So Irene and Dague worked their way, always along backroads through the country, by back streets in towns and cities, south into West Virginia, west into Ohio; "changing cars" almost daily, until they drew up before the house of a sister of Irene in Bellaire, Ohio.

Irene had time only to whisper to her sister,

"We're in trouble. Keep the boy!" And to say to Donnie gaily, "We'll be back soon, honey!"

She did not dare kiss him; it would tell him that "soon" would not be a mere matter of hours.

Then she and Dague drove off and on a lone road they abandoned their car.

Irene had secured a man's ragged suit. She now made a bundle of her dress and put on man's clothing. In it she looked a dumpy youth. Then she and Dague set off on foot.

They knew by the newspapers now that they were being hunted as killers.

They tramped along until they came to a "hobo jungle," one of those impromptu gipsy-like camps of anonymous wayfarers who drift over the American continent. Here no questions are asked that might be resented and food and fuel are pooled in common.

Here Irene and Dague rested for a few days, while they kept track of the hunt for them as best they could through the columns of stray belated newspapers.

When the hue and cry after them seemed to quiet down in the newspapers, Irene and Dague, she still dressed as a man, stole an automobile again and resumed their career, robbing as they went. It may have been only policy that they attempted no ambitious looting; but it says something for the sincerity of Irene's account of it that she wrote later,

"We never did have much nerve. We picked out only lonely filling stations and one-man stores to rob." It is probable that their lack of "nerve" was largely Irene's intelligent economy of risk, intent as she was on a vision of living in peace with Dague and Donnie rather than on a career of excitement.

She and Dague spent most of their nights sleeping in their stolen cars, parked in thickets by the side of some unfrequented road. In Ohio one

night while in a car without a heater they knew their worst night of freezing weather.

Irene and Dague had already lost every ounce of spare flesh. They were in a sedan and had to sit up through the night, with their arms about each other. Though shivering with cold Irene fell asleep. She awoke to find that Dague had taken off his coat and was putting it about her shoulders. She pretended to sleep and waited until she thought Dague was himself asleep; then she tried to put the coat back over him. He awoke and the couple spent the night wrangling about the coat.

Several nights of this so wore them down that they were determined to risk anything for rest in a warm room. They were in Missouri now and Irene, with a sort of bitter challenge, chose St. Louis as their chance for temporary haven, the city where her brother Ed had broken out of prison and was killed in a duel with a policeman.

They waited for evening before they drove into the city.

They were looking for some inconspicuous rooming house and found themselves on a street of few lights, tall warehouses on both sides. Without warning a policeman jumped to their running board, his pistol out.

"Pull over," he ordered. "Want to talk to you!"

He was on the side of the car where Irene sat.

She lowered the window with her right hand. "What have we done?" she cried in tones of fright. The policeman, when Dague had stopped the car, opened the door and put his head in to see that no attempt was made to start the car again.

He began, "You'll find out—"

With her left hand Irene brought her revolver butt down on the policeman's head. The blow caused him to let go his hold on the car and he fell into the street.

Dague sent the car ahead.

From where he lay the policeman emptied his revolver at the fleeing car and blew his whistle. None of the bullets hit it but the firing and the police whistle resounded throughout the quiet street.

The alarm was heard by a detail of six policemen on a cross street a block and a half ahead of the car. The police turned the corner and saw the car coming toward them.

Dague could see them taking their weapons out of their holsters. To turn the car would take more time than Dague could afford if he hoped for escape. To forge ahead meant running through revolver fire. The coupé was so light that a bullet was likely to penetrate to engine vitals, even if Irene or he escaped being hit.

There was a chance for them in the cross street between the car and the police coming on the run toward them. But to which side?

It was at such moments that Irene's desperate wit came into play. In the instant of Dague's indecision she gave the steering wheel a jerk, saying, "When in wrong, turn right!"

They found themselves in an empty street with a clear road ahead. "'Right' is right!" Irene laughed.

A volley followed them and a bullet smashed the little window in the back of the car. Half a mile further they went, turning almost every corner; then they stopped the car, jumped out and ran.

When Irene could no longer run they were in a block of dingy looking rooming houses, with plenty of vacancies indicated by the "Room To Let" signs in windows. They inquired in the most poverty stricken of these houses.

A slatternly woman rented them a room without question. But she wanted money in advance. Dague was about to pay without protest all the landlady asked. Irene knew this would leave them penniless and she fiercely haggled. She managed to salvage a dollar for themselves. They would need it, as she thought, for only newspapers and food; newspapers came first as necessities.

But when she and Dague were alone in their drab room, Dague suddenly slumped to the bed in a semi-faint. Irene thought it was only fatigue. When she put her arm about his shoulders she



found his coat wet. The bullet that had shattered the car window also cut his left shoulder and he had been bleeding.

She washed the wound and bound it as well as she could. Then she and Dague without undressing got into bed for the first time since their flight had started; and sleep overtook them at once.

It must have been noon when Irene woke to find Dague gone. Her very bones ached, her teeth chattered, even her mind was feverish. She cried out when she saw Dague was not there.

Eventually she quieted down enough to realize that he must have gone out to get them food and news. Another fear, however, would not down. She looked in the mirror and saw a dirty young tramp, certainly no sight for a lover no matter how devoted. For all her intense faith in Dague she had no faith in any man's power to love a woman covered with grime and in ugly garb.

She washed and put on the dress to which she had clung when everything had to go by the board.

When Dague came back and saw what she had done, for the first time he wept since Irene had known him. He faltered a lover's vow that she was the most beautiful woman in the world. And for two days and nights they knew delirious happiness.

Then the newspapers told them they must be on the move again.

Again they stole a car and leaving St. Louis struck south.

They crossed Arkansas without any mishaps except to those they robbed. Dague was beginning to feel somewhat more sure of their future, the present being so kind. Under the increasing warmth of the sun as they progressed south, his mind even acquired enough release to play with a historic past as a pledge of their future.

"Your ancestors and mine, Irene," he said waving his hand over what had once been pioneer country, "the Crawfords of West Virginia and the Dagues of Virginia, once blazed the wilderness about here. Then they told our grandfathers, 'Go west, young men!' And that's just what you and I are doing, honey!"

In Texas they were nearing Pecos when they came on a raggedly dressed man limping. He was short and slight, had a thin, shrewd face and looked ill. They invited him to ride with them.

"Going far?" they asked.

He smiled wanly. "Just as far as my club-foot will take me toward the coast," he said. "If I meet many nice folks like you I may get to California in time for the lettuce crop and get a job picking."

To Irene and Dague it sounded as alluring a prospect as to men in former days did the gold fields in California. She and Dague exchanged glances and Irene said,

"Well, if you and we don't quarrel we may take you to California."

The stranger introduced himself as "Joe Wells." Irene and Dague studied him through a screen of small talk and saw that he was as curious about them. Little by little the talk became less guarded; the hosts warmed to their guest; they asked him to stay on with them indefinitely. Eventually the three decided they need have no secrets between them.

"Joe Wells" gave his real name. Then he pulled up his trouser leg and unstrapped the stick that had helped him play lame. He told Irene and Dague about himself. He had left prison without official consent.

When he finished his story Dague looked at Irene. Should they entrust their lives to this man? Before Irene could decide, Joe said,

"The less I know about you, the less I'll know if I'm asked."

Irene was touched. "All right, Joe," she said. "But it's only fair that you should know this—you'd better not be found in our company."

Joe rubbed his chin reflectively. "Well, when it comes to trouble I want to keep out of it as much as anyone," he said. "As for leaving you; you've sort of become a habit with me; and I don't like changing habits!"

He became invaluable to them. He was a vet-

eran hobo, as skilled in making his way over a motorized country as over the semi-wilderness stretches of the southwest. He became scout, skilled cook and clown to the party. Irene and Dague joined his plan for making their way down into Mexico, then back into southern California where they would get jobs as lettuce pickers and from then on would live simply as field laborers. All the three had had enough of the hazards of a criminal's life.

In Arizona, however, trouble raised its head. Newspaper accounts told them that their trail had been picked up well into Texas.

Near Florence, Irene, in the car, was sent ahead to a filling station to buy gasoline. Dague and Joe, a quarter of a mile behind, were walking with their eyes on the car.

From the filling station came a six-footer in a huge cowboy hat. Irene asked for gas and the man proceeded to fill the tank. He did it so clumsily that Irene became suspicious. She was about to get away when the man pushed back his hat and drawled,

"Sister, we'll take a look at your bill of sale for the car!"

"Why, what do you mean?" she demanded.

"Well, well, sister doesn't know what a bill of sale is!" he mocked. "Ain't that surprising, for a bright little girl like you! Now snap out of it! Move

over and let me drive. You'll learn lots at the sheriff's office!"

He got in beside her and Irene pretended to breakdown in tears. Her forehead dropped to the button that sounded the automobile horn. Then she was slow about letting the man have her place.

He had just taken the wheel when over his shoulder he heard a man's voice.

"Climb out with your hands high!"

Two men had him covered with their revolvers and he was wise enough to obey. He did as he was told and got into the back seat between Joe and Irene.

With their unwilling passenger the outlaws drove fast and far until night found them well away in unfrequented country.

There they relaxed for the night but Joe vetoed the suggestion of a camp fire. The three studied their captive but without resentment. He responded by becoming cordial.

He confessed that he was a deputy sheriff. He had read that Dague and Irene must be somewhere in the state and had recognized Irene as a woman in spite of her masculine clothing. "Joe Chapman, is my name, week days," he said. "Sundays," he added with a touch of pride, "I'm *Reverend* Joe Chapman! Protestant Episcopal!"

The night was clear and mild, danger seemed far away; and a friendly truce became the under-

standing. Dague, with awakened memories of the more kindly aspects of his churchly childhood, got into a theological discussion, with Joe Wells interposing bits of caustic atheism.

Irene listened, fascinated by her man's mellow voice rolling out the denominational harangues she thought were his own ideas, his own eloquence. Was this sonorous learned orator *her* man, *her* lover? She felt a pride that was not far from fear, as if she were a beggar who had found a fortune in the street.

The three men spent most of the night in talk.

In the morning the four got into the car again. Joe Wells said to Chapman,

"Preacher, be a good sport! We'll drop you somewhere safe and sound. In return will you give us a chance? Tell us a safe way to get out of this country!"

Chapman pondered. The three watched him. They knew he would tell them some place to go. But who would be speaking, the man of God sealing a bargain in good faith—or the deputy sheriff?

"I think you'd better go through Chandler town," he said finally. His eyes met their anxious scrutiny, frankly, friendlily.

With Dague at the wheel the car avoided by daylight frequented roads. It was not till midnight that the fugitives decided they could trust the streets of Chandler, on the other side of which, according to their promise, they would release Chapman.

They were almost out of the town and had ventured to use a short cut, when Joe Wells, in the back seat, cried out,

“Step on it, Dague! Quick!”

Dague and Irene looked back and saw the headlights of a big car rushing toward them. There was something about the speed of the approaching automobile that sent an electric shock through the outlaws.

The outlaws had a powerful Packard and Dague now used it for all it was worth.

From the car behind came the rattle of firing. The Packard set up a roar as lead penetrated it; but it forged on.

It was a question of miles, however, before the pursuers would be close enough to empty their guns into the Packard at close range. The outlaws made ready to leave their car. Dague clapped the brakes on, the car slid to a halt by the side of a field.

Irene jumped first, Dague and Joe followed. Deputy Sheriff Chapman came last. The outlaws had decided to pretend an effort to escape across the field. The three ran across the shaft of light from their front lamps and showed themselves heading for the field. But they circled their car instead and darted across the dark road.

Chapman jumped out of the Packard just as the pursuers dashed up in their car, shotguns, revolvers and sub-machine guns blazing. He was mis-

taken for one of the fugitives and before he could make himself known he was shot dead.

Later it developed that not only Chapman but another deputy sheriff, Lee Wright, fell. Wright was among the first of the sheriffs to dash into the dark field where he thought the fugitives were; he got far ahead of his own party and was shot. Later he died of the wound.

Irene's written comment on the deaths of Chapman and Wright is caustic impersonal criticism. "The shooting of the two deputy sheriffs saved us and it shows what fools policemen are. They are always shooting each other in the dark and shooting innocent bystanders. I can't understand why policemen don't start out by learning how to handle a gun without hurting themselves. It isn't so hard."

The three fugitives instead of running away from Chandler stole back to it in the dark; entered it separately; met again in the heart of the town; and with a certain grim humor looked about until they found another Packard to steal. The town was awake early that day, gathering for a wholesale search over the surrounding country. Every suspicious character for miles about Chandler was to be picked up on the chance that among them would be the hunted three. It did not occur to the gathering posse that the fugitives of their own choice would go back into the midst of the hunting pack.

Before a garage several cars were parked,



among them a Packard. Joe Wells went up to the garage owner and badgered him for a job. Meanwhile Dague and Irene quietly got into the Packard and made ready to drive off.

The garage owner was so angry at Joe's insistence that he had no thought of anything but to get rid of him. Joe Wells waited till a telephone called the garage owner into the office; then Joe left, joined Irene and Dague in the Packard.

The three got a twenty minute start before the garage man missed his car; but twenty minutes proved sufficient. Using the tactic which had gained them safe return through Chandler the three headed boldly for Phoenix, the very capital of the state.

Irene's own account of this phase of their plight \* gives some hint of the cool thinking she was doing, as leader of the party. Whatever helped her maintain this fearless functioning of her wits it could not have been ignorance of what was going on all about them.

She knew that the motor roads were alive with sheriffs and posses hunting them with automobiles. Other packs of hunters were after them on horseback. Bloodhounds were on their trail, starting with the scent given them in the bullet-riddled Packard the fugitives had abandoned outside Chandler. A troop of Apache scouts, under the command of Chief Light Foot, not to be despised in semi-wilderness

\* "New York Daily Mirror."

tracking, were enlisted. And to add a note of bizarre alliance to the hunt, several airplanes were scouting above.

In the face of all this Irene led the two men along the main road to Phoenix. They were actually in the city when Irene decided for a bit of caution in their daring.

“When we got to Phoenix,” she wrote, “we saw that the road went right through the center of the town. With all those wounded sheriffs behind us”—she did not know that Chapman was dead and Wright would die—“we couldn’t risk that, so we decided to find a side road.

“Back where we came from, in the Panhandle country around Wheeling, West Virginia, you could always find some kind of a road going the same direction as the main road but not so good, and not watched so much by the police. But we soon found out that Arizona is different. There, if you got off the main road, you’re lost. What we got into was a kind of big trap, about three hundred miles wide. We took a trail running out of the main road at a crossing before the heart of Phoenix. We could turn either right or left and I turned to the right.

“First that trail had houses on it, then it was a sort of wheel track with nothing on it, then it got to be just a sort of dry river bed of hard sand and gravel, and then it just turned into nothing at all but a desert full of boulders and dead bushes where

you couldn't drive a car. We went up it nearly 75 miles before we quit and turned back.

"We were scared to go back to the crossing where we turned out of the main road but we had to do it; and we were relieved to see that there were no sheriffs waiting to grab us. We went right across the main road full speed and into the trail on the other side.

"Glenn figured it might lead down into Mexico and that we could get to California by going west in Mexico until we got near the coast and then coming up toward Los Angeles. . . . Glenn and I told Joe Wells again and again he had better leave us and pretend he was never with us, but he refused and said that if we got into bad country we would need him to show us how to find water and stuff to eat. He acted as if we were a couple of babies that would never get along without him watching all the time.

"We went up that left trail about sixty miles and it did the same thing the other one—quit on us. We went back and forth along that trail twice, hunting for a way out of the trap but never found any. We did about 300 miles before we gave up.

"When we were at a river—the Gila River, named after a poisonous animal—and it sure was poison to us—we abandoned the car. Joe Wells took on about the car and patted it on the hood and called it pet names and said good-bye. We felt the same about the old bus. The three of us, in spite of

all our troubles, had hatched such dreams in it of getting away to California, that it was like being put out of a home to lose it.

"The river was shallow, so we could wade it. We waded down the river quite a distance to throw the bloodhounds off our trail if they got down as far as the river. The water was up to our knees. The stones cut my feet. But what was worse was later when our clothes and the sand and the sun made us itch enough to drive us crazy.

"Far away across the plains we could see the hills and mountains and we headed for them. It looked far away but it was even farther than it looked. Night came on and it looked as if we had made no progress toward getting to the hills, though we walked all the time as fast as I could keep up.

"It was agreed that nothing more would be said for the time being about the idea of giving up. I knew the boys were thinking of saving me useless pain; but I would not let them talk that way. But I could see that Glenn could think of nothing but my sore feet and the way I looked; and that he was always figuring about giving himself up and to let me go.

"That night after Joe Wells fell asleep with his arms on the gravel I asked Glenn if he was awake, and when he said yes, I said,

" 'We won't give up yet, honey, but if we *have* to later, I want you to promise me one thing!'

He asked me what. I said, 'That you'll swear not to take the blame alone. We've done everything together. I want to live in peace with you forever if we're lucky. But if we aren't, I want to live with you in trouble and die with you, if we have to.'

"When he started to argue I said, 'No, it's the only kind of marriage we can have, you and I. If you keep me out of trouble that you're in I'll feel that you're denying me. And it won't do you any good anyhow. I'll see to that!' So he swore to make it fifty-fifty. . . .

"Then we fell asleep. But we hadn't been sleeping ten minutes when Joe Wells woke us and said, 'Look!'

"What we saw was a grass fire back behind us on the route we had come and to each side of us. Joe told us that this meant Indians. They did that in order to catch sight of us against the flames. The way the Indians work it, they separate in two parties and move along to the right and left of the people they are hunting. Then the party on the right lights a grass fire and the party on the left looks to see if the people they are chasing pass between them and the light, showing up in outlines if they do. Then the party on the left answers with a grass fire, so it's pretty hard to move and not be seen.

"Joe Wells said: 'They've found the car all right and they'll figure we're headed for the hills.

Now we have to make the hills before they do or it's all up!

"So we got going again, though we were miserable with tiredness. We had to zigzag around, trying not to come between watchers and the fires. So we made even slower time toward the mountains.

"We came to a canal about when the sky began to get lighter and Joe said we might as well walk erect and straight now because soon they would see us by daylight anyhow. But the canal seemed to be the end. It was deep and neither Glenn nor I could swim. I sat down on the edge and would have cried I was so numb and so wanted to sleep. And if I didn't cry it was only I was just too tired even to try.

"Glenn said: 'That settles it! We'll wait for the Indians.'

"That made me wake up. I dangled my legs in the canal and the cold water got me good and wakened and then I could think again. I said that if Joe could swim we could make it too. Joe could swim. So I told my plan, and we took Glenn's overalls and his coat and Joe's coat and tore them in strips and made a rope out of them.

"And Joe swam over the canal with one end of the rope in his teeth. When he was on the other side, I grabbed my end of the rope in my hands. Joe gave a signal for me to jump in. I thought I would drown sure but it would be just as well maybe. Once when

*I was a little girl and mother died and they wouldn't let me go to her funeral I wanted to drown myself. I said to myself now, 'It's funny I didn't do it then and had all these experiences and end up by drowning anyway.'* But I said it was worth it and I was glad I didn't miss knowing Glenn. I went under but kept hold of the rope and Joe pulled it in fast, and while I thinking I was drowning he pulled me out and I was on the other side of the canal.

"Joe swam back and Glenn took the end of the rope and Joe got him over the canal in the same way he got me over. . . ."

The three resumed their uphill trudging. Then Joe looked back and saw below them the first of their pursuers. He knew they were Indians, he told the others, because "they walked stooped over instead of like whites, straight up."

The sight affected Joe Wells badly. Irene wrote,

"Now Joe Wells began to weaken.

"I'm not complaining about Joe, one of the grandest fellows I ever knew, but I'm making the point that men weaken before women in the kind of heart-breaking trouble we were in; wet and itchy, walking and walking toward those mountains, skinning ourselves on stones, and figuring it was no use after all, because the Indians and sheriff's would get us in the end anyway.

"I figure that women would have been fine sol-

diers in the trenches—at least women that were poor girls would. Better than men. Because boys get used to one kind of trouble and girls to another kind. Boys can stand getting hurt in a fight or a game or something that is fun, but it's girls that know how to stand getting hurt when it isn't any fun at all, like washing dishes and being burned or scrubbing floors and having your nails come loose.

“What I mean is, that as long as it was like a game, Joe Wells could keep on going and cooking camp meals and swimming rivers, like in a movie, but as soon as it was hopeless, and just walking on sore feet and not getting anywhere, then it was my turn to keep the men going. I was used to walking on sore feet. In that restaurant I worked when I met Glenn I kept on carrying heavy trays whether my feet hurt or not.

“So Joe sat down and said, ‘Let's wait for them here.’ One thing he ran out of cigarettes and he figured maybe the sheriffs would give him a smoke when they arrested us.

“But I said, ‘No, let's keep on going. They haven't got us yet. If we get in those hills maybe we will lose them.’

“I tried to cheer up Joe with talk about how well we would live in California if we ever got there and got jobs in the lettuce fields. I told him I would cook him real feeds not the kind of messes he knew how to cook on campfires.



"But he sat stock still on the ground and refused to budge and began to tell Glenn that we would be fools to keep on going. The thing that got Joe finally on his feet was not my talk but the sight of the men coming on, now looking like an army of whites as well as Indians, even if they did look small like ants.

"We started for the mountains on the run. In about an hour we began to climb. Glenn was ahead finding places for us to crawl. Then I heard him stop and listen.

"And I heard what he heard, an airplane motor hum.

"It then came up out of the lowlands and shoved up out of the mist with sunlight on its wings. It was to the right and beat us to the mountains and went around a big shoulder of one and went out of sight.

"We were wondering if, after all, it hadn't missed us and would report that to the others. Then it circled back from around the other side of the mountain back into the path we were taking. The man in it must have seen us, because the plane came down low over our heads and dipped.

"Joe told us that was to show the sheriffs and the Indians we were there.

"Glenn got a bit light-headed and his religion came back to him. He looked up at the mountain we

were climbing and began singing, 'Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me.' He has a sweet voice.

"Joe and I saw the Indians were coming after us faster than the sheriffs and twice as fast as we were going. But we managed to get to the top of the small mountain we had been climbing. It was our first plan to cross it and get to the next and bigger mountain behind it.

"But the Indians beat us to the valley and we were surrounded.

"The top of our mountain had a square rock on it, about the size of a kitchen cabinet. It was sunk in the ground and had ditches around it where we could lie and escape bullets.

"The bullets began to come. You could tell they were close because they chipped the rock we were under. Then I went crazy. I wanted to kill the people who were trying to kill us. I got up and shot my gun toward where the Indians might be. We couldn't see them and they probably could see us, because a bullet came and made a cut across my neck and I could feel a little blood. I could feel the back of my neck and look at my hand, all bloody.

"Then the airplane came back and dived down and I could hear something go put-put-put. I couldn't tell if it was the engine or a machine gun but the rock began to spit pieces and I lay down under it.

"All this time Glenn was looking at a cloud

and his eyes were getting big and his look frightened me.

"I said, 'What is it, honey?'"

"And he stared as if he didn't know me and pointed to the cloud. Then he said it was the image of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, and he pointed to another little cloud that did look like a halo; and Glenn cried out that the Lord was saying, 'Give up and be not afraid. I am with my children!'"

"Glenn's lips kept on moving. So I prayed too: 'I give myself up, dear Lord, to you, not to the Indians. Amen.' "

Thus, three thousand miles from the steel country where it first exploded, only three weeks after the two had decided to "take bread by force," ended the outbreak generated by the union of Irene and Dague.

They and Joe Wells were taken to an Arizona jail. A woman in a cell next to Irene's asked her,

"What are you in for?"

"Plenty!" said Irene.

Pennsylvania extradited Irene and Dague for the murder of Brady Paul. Joe Wells was kept by Arizona.

Meanwhile Donnie had been located in the house of Irene's father and two Pennsylvania state policemen came to question him. To their surprise the first words from the youngster was an indignant,

"Who's a bum!"

"No one called you a bum, sonny!" the policemen assured him.

The boy broke into a laugh. "The bumblebee is a bum! My mama taught me that joke."

They asked him what else he could tell them about his mother.

"My mama shot two cops like you," he said proudly. "She gave me a little pistol too. But her pistol always went boom-boom; but mine only went bang-bang!"

Donnie's testimony at the trial of his mother and Glenn Dague counted heavily against Irene. But it made little difference to her emotionally. If anything she was glad.

For from the first she insisted that it was she who had shot and killed Brady Paul.

Glenn Dague on the other hand insisted it was his bullet that had done it.

Testimony brought out the fact that while Irene's revolver was of .32 calibre and Dague's was .38, it was a .38 bullet that had killed the patrolman.

The lawyer for the defense pleaded that Irene be spared capital punishment for Donnie's sake.

The prosecution countered with, "For the child's sake, send her to the chair!"

The jury took a little over two hours to come to agreement. When the twelve filed back into the courtroom it was seen that the only woman on the jury was smiling. A whisper ran about the court-

room that the smile was a good sign for Irene. Then the foreman announced the verdict,

"Guilty of murder in the first degree, with the *death penalty recommended.*"

Irene's three sisters in the courtroom broke into sobs. Irene looked down at them and deep disgust showed on her face.

"Shut up!" she said. "I can take it!"

Glenn Dague received the verdict with a pale face, his eyes never leaving Irene.

The two were taken back to their cells. Dague's was directly below hers.

They had already learned how they could communicate from one cell to the other. There was a drain in the back of Irene's cell that connected with the catch-basin in Dague's cell. By singing or talking loudly into the basin Dague could make himself heard by Irene; in a similar way she could make herself heard by him. Often he sang to her by this means. Now that they were back in their cells after the verdict she called down to him,

"How are you feeling, Glenn?"

"I'm all right," he replied. "How are you?"

"I'm feeling fine," she replied; then joked, "Come on up!"

"I can't."

"Well, then go to bed, you lovable old devil!"

In Arizona Joe Wells was tried for the murder

of Deputy Sheriff Lee Wright. He was found guilty and hanged.

At the time of this writing Irene and Dague were waiting to learn the exact date of their own execution.

What was Irene's feeling at this time may be indicated by a bit of verse she was moved to write:

*Water when I'm thirsty  
Whisky when I'm dry  
You lover from heaven  
For me till I die!*

## X

### A COUNTY OF CRIME

**I**N Herrin, the trading and cultural center of Williamson County in southern Illinois, three hundred children are enrolled in violin classes in the town's seven grammar schools. The high school orchestra aspires to the symphonies of Beethoven and Tschaikovsky. The Women's Club of Herrin paid Mme. Schumann-Heinck \$1,500 for a single concert in the town's auditorium which seats twenty-two hundred. A radio station is planned so that Herrin may soon be broadcasting music to the whole world.

Many who read the story of Williamson County and its trading center will hear in all this music from Herrin an overtone of irony to the narrative, a sardonic comment on Congreve's dear old banality "music hath charms to soothe the savage breast."

For as recently as March, 1930, in the town's primary elections nobody could be found willing to run for the office of mayor of Herrin.

It was not that the town is poor and cannot afford to pay its mayor. Quite the contrary; its ten

thousand inhabitants own seventeen hundred automobiles. Nor is it that its citizens are too busy to bother with politics; there were five different parties and tickets in the field at the primary elections I mention. The fact that only a few weeks before the primaries the mayor of Herrin, Marshall McCormack, and its chief of police, John Stamm, were sent to prison as conspirators in the sale of liquor, does not explain Herrin's trouble in finding a candidate for the mayoralty; not everybody in Herrin is corrupt and easily half the population is as savagely for prohibition as the other half is for liquor.

The reasons for the freak situation in the March primaries lie in the blazing sadistic history of Williamson County, especially that of Herrin; and they are far more important than that particular mayoralty crisis. For there is a mayor in Herrin now. The question is, at what moment will Williamson County break out again and once more appall the world by its talent for picturesque savagery, while its children are occupied with their music classes, and its club women busy with culture's sweetness and light?

The county has been known as "Bloody Williamson" for over three-quarters of a century. Interpretations of racial character often stress extremes of climate and obdurate soil as root causes for strains of savagery in a given people. The climate of southern Illinois is temperate. Its soil is black, deep and



generous. Also the land is richly veined with soft coal.

The people, however, who first settled in numbers in southern Illinois came there, not much more than a century ago, from the mountains of Kentucky, Tennessee and the Carolinas. Like those they left behind them, they were a lean, hard, narrow-minded, intense race who held life cheap and who could nurse a dispute over a mongrel hound or a personal slight till it grew to a blood-feud for generations.

Paradoxically enough there is something civilized in the Anglo-Saxon fist fight, with its understanding that there must be no hitting "below the belt," or when a man is down. But among the settlers in Williamson County there was no such self-imposed limitation. They fought "free"; no holds were barred; heavy-booted kicking, stamping on a prostrate man, gouging, anything "went." A man fought not only to finish his enemy but also to satisfy blood lust.

And fights between individuals became family feuds which, when the issue spread, developed into battles between organizations. For decades after the Civil War the original "Ku Klux Klan" and "The Knights of the Flaming Circle," anti-Klan, flourished, decimated each other and flourished anew.

When Civil War issues finally died out others arose in Williamson County. The most bitter and

enduring of these grew from the spiritual poverty of a backward people. So drab was the inner life of most of those who lived in this region that many of them resorted to drink, gambling and other distractions, while the rest enlisted in militant Protestant churches.

Between the church element and those who wanted to "live and let live" it was the religious bigots who forced the issue. It was not enough for these zealots to deny themselves indulgences of the flesh; others must be made to forego these indulgences too. Hell awaited the unregenerate; but the church element was not willing to wait for the Judgment Day of the others; the wicked must be saved by the righteousness, or at least given a taste in this life of the hell that awaited them.

So the militants of the churches invaded the saloons, the gambling houses and the disorderly resorts of Williamson County, smashed furniture, drove out the publicans and nagged and hounded the sinners, their own neighbors, to bring them to righteous living.

The sinners, however, were of the same obdurate race as their would-be saviors and bitterly fought back an enforced salvation. As numerically the two elements were about even, the struggle between the two in Williamson County has not been settled to this day.

From their mountain days the first settlers of

Williamson County resented outside interference in their feuds. Law and government, when they undertook to put down disorder in Williamson County, were regarded as trespassing on fundamental human rights, forces to be tolerated when there was no choice, but not to be allied with against one's own neighbors, no matter how guilty they were in the eyes of the law.

How much or little the temper brought to Williamson County by its original settlers has changed with the years and succeeding generations, we shall see.

A century of tilling its rich soil has made Williamson a prosperous farming county. Then coal was discovered there and many Williamson men went to work in the mines. The United Mine Workers of America had no difficulty in unionizing them; not one man would dare to scab there.

The coal companies accepted the situation and labor and capital in Williamson County got along with a minimum of friction, and kept their funds in the same banks. In Herrin the union miners had their headquarters over a bank owned by a coal company.

This was the situation when America entered the Great War and thousands of Williamson County men went to France to fight.

While they were away the old struggle between the aggressively righteous and the rest of the popu-

lation was raging throughout the whole of the United States and focused on the question of alcohol. The righteous won. When the Williamson County men came back from the war they found their prohibition neighbors armed with a new and mighty weapon, the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

Many of the returning veterans were angry; but their anger was for the time diverted from the question of alcohol; the bread and butter of those who worked in the mines was threatened. In the post-war economic slump, wage and other disputes arose between the nationally organized coal companies and the United Mine Workers of America.

The coal companies laid down their terms and stood by their ultimatum. The unions refused these terms and called a general strike throughout the industry.

The strike became prolonged but Williamson County strikers were not worrying. The mines were one hundred per cent unionized and not a lump of coal would be dug or sent out of the county without the consent of the strikers.

Then in June, 1922, William J. Lester, a coal operator, undertook to do what the other coal companies dared not. As head of the Southern Illinois Coal Company he determined to work a "strip" mine eight miles northwest of Marion, the seat of

Williamson County, with or if necessary without the consent of the strikers.

Lester was a heavy square-shouldered, bald-headed man, with a jutting jaw, a fleshy beak of a nose, a hard clamped mouth, and large cold grey eyes. At first he tried to work his mine by means of a ruse. The coal was so close to the surface that it could be dug by steam shovels operating above ground. Lester hired a strong force of men from outside of the county, called them "steam shovelers," organized them into a so-called union; and proceeded to dig coal, claiming that he was not involved in the miners' strike.

The miners' union warned him that he was; and ordered him to stop work at his mine.

Lester said, "I'll be damned if I close my mine for any union!"

He went on working his mine and shipping coal out of the county.

Strikers and coal operators all over the mining country watched with interest to see what would happen to Lester's defiance. If in spite of the strike coal could be dug in Williamson County and shipped out without hindrance the same could be done elsewhere.

A committee of Williamson miners came to Lester and again peremptorily told him to close his mine. He threw them out of his office. Then he and his mine superintendent, Charles McDowell, directed

a thoroughly workmanlike job of converting the mine into a fortress.

A public road that ran through the mine property was barricaded. Trains of heavy coal cars were arranged in a triple ring about the mine, their walls reinforced with iron plates. Machine guns were mounted inside the cars and on the roofs.

Then Lester went to Chicago and conferred with the Hargraves Detective Agency.

The next day Williamson County witnessed the coming of a small army of strangers. Hard men were no novelty in southern Illinois; but these newcomers were the hardest looking crew Williamson County had ever seen. Furthermore they brought with them an impressive armament of automatic revolvers, Winchester rifles, sub-machine guns and truck loads of ammunition. There were even some of the paraphernalia of trench warfare, several light field pieces, gas bombs and equipment for electrifying barbed wire barricades.

From the hills about the Lester mine the striking miners could see these heavily armed arrivals mount guard on the coal car fortifications and protecting scabs at work.

Several hotheads among the strikers tried to get near enough to remonstrate with the scabs. One of them, Jordan Harrison, came within a hundred feet of the outer ring of coal cars. A mine guard

squatting on the roof of a coal car with a rifle across his knees called out,

“That’s as far as you’re going! Beat it, and beat it fast!”

“I’m on a public road,” Jordan retorted. “And nobody’s going to stop me using a public road in my own county!”

He was correct in his stand but mistaken about the outcome. He was stopped where he stood, shot dead.

Jordan’s friends were permitted by the mine guards to get the body but not to linger about the task.

That night several strikers tried to steal up to the mine. Searchlights on top of the coal cars made the attempt dangerous; and Guy Hudgens, another Williamson County striker, was killed.

• The next day the mine guards potted a third victim.

To the newcomers, accustomed as most of them were to underworld warfare in Chicago and other cities, their job in Williamson County seemed a tame affair, as may be judged by the letter one of them wrote to his mistress in St. Louis.

“Have been Down Here since june 9. No doubt you will be surprised to learn am Down here with a Gang of moonshiners: Ha, Ha! But the moonshine is Winchesters, Rifles & field Guns. We are only waiting for them to start the Band playing. . . . We

have 2 Guns planted on the Dam Reservoy & 2 on coal and on sleeping cars and 6 Guns on top of the Hills. They only shoot 600 shots a minute apiece. There is also 100 Guards with Winchesters that shoot 3 miles. But so long as these bozos here keep three miles away they're safe. But H—— help them if they ever start in on Mining Co property. . . . We shipped out 20 cars of coal yesterday. . . . Well, \$12.00 a day for sitting here with a Winchester in your lap looks good to me, that's \$360 for the 30 days we're hired for. . . .”

It must have been while this guard was writing his letter that telephone wires were most busy throughout the length and breadth of Williamson County and its neighbors, Franklin, Saline, Pope, Johnson, Union, and Jackson Counties.

Everywhere men were gathering, and they were not only mine strikers. Old grudges were forgotten for the time being and armed men piled into the first automobile that came along bearing other armed men. The roads leading to Herrin and Marion became crowded with cars. Hundreds of them were parked at the foot of the hills that surrounded the Lester mine.

It was estimated that as many as five thousand armed men from the surrounding counties gathered on those hill tops during the night of June 21.

Toward four in the morning there was an explosion. The power house and the pumping station



of the Lester mine had been blown up; and the mine was without light or water.

Then from the ring of hills about the mine bullets began to pour into the fortified camp.

Every machine gun in the camp replied and even the cooking crew were ordered to drop kitchen kit and take up rifles.

Besieged and attackers exchanged firing at long range. Roughly estimated, about a hundred bullets must have answered every bullet that came from the camp.

Bullets riddled the coal car walls, poured in through every gap in the defenses and found vulnerable targets. Among the wounded was Superintendent McDowell.

Then at five in the morning the strikers rushed down from the hills, firing as they came.

The attack was such a surprising, overwhelming, withering blast, that it shattered at a blow all the hitherto thoughtless courage of the defenders. Loud among those who now clamored for McDowell to run up the white flag of surrender were some of the hardest of the hard gentry sent down to impress Williamson County.

For two hours McDowell maintained the defense. Then some of the mine guards without consulting him ran up a white flag on one of the coal cars.

At the sight all the defenders threw down their

guns and into the mining enclosure swarmed the victors. Many of them wore battered steel helmets that had seen service in the trenches of France.

The mine guards and workers were searched for weapons. Then they were tied together by threes and sixes, with their legs left free. They were formed into a line and marched off. At the head of the column limped Superintendent McDowell.

They were led along roads that were lined on both sides by armed men.

At first the prisoners encountered only hoarse inarticulate growls and fury in the faces about them. But there were many women in the crowd and their cries affected the captives badly. The women were calling for blood. Their cries mounted and here and there a woman broke from the side of the road and struck, kicked and clawed at some of the bound men.

Suddenly the procession was halted. A man was lifted to the shoulders of the crowd, and as if he were the voice and they the body, the crowd became still as he spoke.

"Williamson County has been invaded by a gang of strikebreakers!" he cried. "The only way to save our jobs and our homes is to kill off the breed! Am I right?"

A deep roar went up edged with the shrill note of women's hysteria.

The cry of assent was brief and the speaker got silence again. He addressed the captives.

The captives led by Superintendent McDowell did as they were forced, turned off the road and went up a sparsely wooded slope.

When McDowell and those with him reached a barbed wire fence firing broke out in back and to both sides of them. McDowell was the first to fall.

What followed for the next few hours is well known and is too bloody and bestial to justify retelling here in detail. A single glimpse, described by a survivor of the massacre, will be enough. Williamson County had an enemy prostrate and was fighting him as their forefathers would, "free"; stamping, gouging, sating their blood thirst. The witness I refer to was William Cairns, one of the captured Lester mine employees whom the mob "allowed to run" when they reached the barbed wire fence in the woods.

"I tried to crawl through the fence," he testified later, "but pulled it over and lay face downward on the ground while the crowd chased the other fleeing prisoners.

"While I was lying there I saw one of our wounded men leaning against a tree with his blood-streaked face on his arm. A couple of men with guns

came up and said to him, 'You big ———, *can't* we kill you!' Then they fired into his body."

When the orgy was over, twenty-two mutilated bodies were taken to undertaker "parlors" in Herrin and in Marion and the hospitals in both towns were filled with more than sixty wounded men.

Williamson County and its neighbors went back to their homes. Law and government came marching into Herrin, state troops one thousand strong. Williamson County offered no objection. Law and government could please itself now that the county had settled its grudge.

Wholesale arrests were made of men known to have taken part in the massacre, all union miners. Two grand juries indicted seventy-six of these for riot, for intent to murder, and for murder.

Before indictments can become effective, however, witnesses are needed, with good memories. Considering that a mob of five thousand had taken part in the attack on the mine and in the shambles that followed, one would expect that there would be plenty of witnesses available for the state to call upon. But by the time the prosecution in the case was ready for trial the seventy-six indictments dwindled to five. Law and government could plead until it was hoarse the duty of citizens to help the punishment of crime. Williamson County felt that crime *had* been punished; there was nothing more to be done in the matter.

The trial was held in the County Court House in Marion. The five defendants on trial for their lives sat placidly looking on while a jury was being picked. The jurymen had to be selected of course from among the citizens of Williamson County. Jurymen and defendants were neighbors and of the same stock.

One of those on trial for his life, Clem Clarke, a member of the miners' union, read throughout the proceedings, finishing "Main Street" and Shaw's "Man and Superman" as the trial went on. The jury listened stolidly to the few witnesses the state was able to summon.

The verdict was to be expected. Stolidly the foreman of the jury read the findings of the twelve men who had sworn to be the faithful instruments of justice. "We find the deaths of the decedents were due to acts direct and indirect of the officials of the Southern Illinois Coal Company and to gunshot wounds at the hands of persons unknown."

The country was shocked at the verdict. Williamson County was not. It had always settled its own feuds in its own way and would continue to do so.

William J. Lester, the man who would "be damned if he closed his mine for any union," was of course far from the scene of slaughter when it took place. He now brought suit against the United Mine Workers of America for damages to his mine.

Under an interpretation of the Sherman Anti-trust Act, trade unions were liable for such damages. And the United Mine Workers of America decided it was wiser to buy Lester's mine from him than to go to court. So they paid him three-quarters of a million dollars for it.

The county was quiet now and the state troops went back to their armories. Life in "Bloody Williamson" resumed its normal tenor.

Which meant that new violence was hatching. Now that the common enemy, the scab, had been wiped out, the men of Williamson again separated into two warring camps; those who wanted liquor and those who did not want them to have it.

Those who wanted liquor, law or no law, were numerous, and those who did not want them to have it were just as many. Roughly classified the liquor crowd had the miners with them, the others the farmers and the churches. The wets had the towns and the drys the country districts. Each element elected its town and county officials in Williamson; Herrin becoming the stronghold of the wets, while the drys had to be content with smaller towns and minor county offices.

Many of the Williamson citizens made liquor in their own homes. Saloons and roadhouses flourished. Organized bootlegging, directed by Chicago's notorious captains of the industry, sent agents down to Williamson County. They found the county an

attractive field for operation, so "wide open" it was.

But the other half of the county was not content to let the sinners have their way. At this time the whole nation was witnessing the resurrection of the Ku Klux Klan; and Williamson County became as fertile ground for its recruiting agents as any other backward section of the country.

Klan chapters were formed there, paraded in their robes of white, burned fiery crosses in the dark and held their bombastic rituals. At first the rest of Williamson County laughed at all this mummary, at these farm hands, store clerks and garage mechanics togged out in hoods and robes and calling themselves Kleagles, Wizards, Cyclops and what not. The scoffers forgot that under these flamboyant costumes were men of the same tough and lawless breed as themselves.

As the Klan movement in Williamson grew, however, the others stopped scoffing and began to organize. Since the Ku Klux Klan had harked back to the period after the Civil War their opponents now did the same and revived The Knights of the Flaming Circle.

Both sides were ready for action now but it was the Klan that took the offensive. They imported a leader, S. Glenn Young. He deserves description.

He was a lightly built man and looked younger than his forty-one years. He had cold, melancholy grey eyes that looked icy when he was in action.

His cheek bones and jaws were prominent and his nose was bony. He had the hard-bitten bitter mouth of the fanatic-sadist; and his face had the pallor and the lines of a man who never relaxes.

When he was a youth of twenty he was an officer of the law; and under commission by both the federal government and the state of North Carolina he was sent into the Blue Ridge Mountains to make arrests. The man's own account of that period indicates his temper.

"They just gave me a blanket, a badge and a gun and told me to bring in the bad men," he said. "They were murderers and it was up to me to deliver them to the Circuit Judge, alive if possible, dead if necessary. An officer cannot do much palaver-ing with a murderer. On a hunt for a man who hides in the mountains the one that lives to tell the story is the one who sees the other first, unless he can talk him out of shooting. . . .

"I never lost a man in the sixteen years I worked in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Every man I ever killed was in self-defense. One case will show what I mean—my first killing. It was when I was still little more than a boy. I chased a man into Oklahoma and caught him at Tulsa. A short time afterwards I was eating in a café at Muskogee when before I knew it his brother was in the room. He just leaned over and cut my throat, practically slicing



my head off before I killed him. It was only then that I filled him full of bullets.

“At another time in Madison, Illinois, I raided a foreigner’s home and found twenty-five gallons of corn whisky under the floor of his shanty. He didn’t mind being arrested but when I started to confiscate his whisky he shoved a gun in my face and pulled the trigger. It only clicked. I heard the plunger fall several times before I planted six bullets in him.

“Another case was in Pope County, just a few months ago when I was trailing a man and his son, with a warrant for the father for wife beating. I overtook them on the Ohio river near the Kentucky line. Each had two pistols and two shotguns and opened fire on me. I killed them both.”

This was the man the Ku Klux Klan of Williamson County imported to lead their forces. His legal status at this time was a matter of dispute. He claimed to be a federal prohibition agent and the Klan supported him in this claim. Later the government denied that he had any official standing at the time of his Williamson County activity.

Nevertheless he went to work there, at first secretly gathering evidence against the liquor element in the county. When he was ready to act he notified the Klan.

This was in 1924, a few days before the Christmas holidays. In thousands of homes all over Wil-

Williamson County wine and whisky were being stored for celebration.

S. Glenn Young had meanwhile secured evidence against one hundred and sixty places in the county where liquor was being sold and had listed hundreds of homes where they were brewing their own liquor.

At the word from him the Ku Klux Klan quietly marshaled a force of nine hundred of its members and meeting in the night arrived in automobiles at the place appointed by Glenn Young. He divided his force into a hundred raiding parties, all closely in touch.

Over the county they scattered, revolvers strapped to their hips, rifles in their hands. The doors of a hundred speakeasies were smashed in, their owners were dragged out half dressed and with them several hundred employees and their families were hustled off in cars to the jail in the Klan town of Benton.

So quietly had all this been accomplished that every one of the prisoners was behind bars before telephones all over Williamson County began to buzz with spreading anger.

Glenn Young and the Klan had kept their preparations a secret from the sheriff of Williamson County, George Galligan. He was a member of the miners' union, a commonplace personality who had won office largely because he was a politician.

*His headquarters were in Herrin; Herrin votes were responsible for his election; and Herrin was "wet." Therefore Glenn Young and the Klan knew they could not depend upon him for cooperation in their campaign to "clean up the county."*

When the news spread of the raids by Glenn Young and the Klan on the night of December 20, again as two years before, Williamson men armed and gathered. From then on Young and his raiders found their job harder.

For instance, a strong party of Klan members descended on Cartersville, an anti-Klan town. At the entrance to the town they found a solid phalanx of men squinting at them along the muzzles of Winchester rifles. In the front rank of these the Klansmen recognized every member of the town's police.

The leader of the raiding party called out, "You cops, scatter these men and come and help us. We are special deputies and we have warrants to serve on violators of the Prohibition Act!"

"Try and serve them!" said Cartersville.

The raiding party declined the invitation and went back to their chief, reporting what had happened.

Glenn Young thereupon served warrants of arrest on the whole Cartersville police force, charging them with resisting government officers and threatening to kill them.

From all over Williamson County anti-Klan

forces gathered, in some places as unorganized groups, elsewhere as "Knights of the Flaming Circle." There was rage but as yet no action. Young and the Klan had "got the jump" on them, were the first to organize, the first to secure effective leadership and the first to make use of the machinery of official law. But the anti-Klan element promised reprisal.

Glenn Young's reply was characteristic. Two nights after his first raid on speakeasies and three days before Christmas he gathered his Klan again, more than a thousand this time. Then in the night he raided hundreds of private homes throughout Williamson County, confiscated liquor he found in private larders, arrested in their beds hundreds of Williamson citizens and rushed them off to the jail in Benton.

The next morning Benton was swarming with thousands of men and women about the jail where members of their family were behind bars.

But Benton jail has strong walls and iron bars and behind them, in the cells with the prisoners, sat Klan deputy sheriffs with repeating rifles on their knees.

Sheriff Galligan then gave out a broad hint in a public statement he issued to the press. "The state of Illinois has no law against carrying weapons if they are not concealed. Even if I should find machine guns I couldn't do anything in the matter because

a man is allowed by law to have guns in his home."

The anti-Klan forces, now generally enlisted in the Knights of the Flaming Circle, took Galligan's hint. He was no leader. What he could do and did was to secure for the Knights a leader of mettle akin to that of S. Glenn Young; and to give him the right to call himself an officer of the law, just as Young claimed to be one. He appointed Ora Thomas as deputy sheriff of Williamson County.

Ora Thomas was a Chicago product, born and brought up in the stockyard district. He was, like Glenn Young, rather light in build. He had sharp foxlike features. On his thin lips lurked a smile that had little to do with humor or good nature. Otherwise his good looks were disarming. Early as an adolescent he became expert with the automatic revolver, exceptionally so. His marksmanship and his metallic temper, disguised by his stealthy smile, helped him survive crises and encounters in which many of his friends and foes in Chicago perished.

He came down to Williamson County to follow his current occupation as a bootlegger. In this he was so active that almost as soon as he came to Williamson he was arrested, convicted and served a term in jail. He came out again just as Williamson County was actively dividing on the issue of liquor and at once got into the fight.

This man the Knights of the Flaming Circle

chose as their leader and Sheriff Galligan appointed as his deputy to offset S. Glenn Young.

Young answered the move by moving to Herrin. He and his followers strode its streets, the stronghold of the "wets," as if they were conquerors in a subjugated city.

Young, for instance, entered the store of Paul Corder, a Herrin merchant, and made for the back of the store. Corder got in his way. "Where are you going, Young?" he demanded.

"To look for your liquor," Young said. "Get out of the way!"

Corder did not budge. "Where is your search warrant?" he asked.

"Here it is!" Young said, sending his fist into Corder's face.

Corder was unarmed whereas Young had a revolver strapped in each trouser leg, a rifle in his hands and two armed Klansmen were with him.

The three ransacked Corder's store, found no liquor but left the place in disarray.

Corder swore out a warrant against Young for assault with a deadly weapon. Deputy Sheriff Ora Thomas saw to it that the warrant was served and that Young's case was called immediately.

Young was willing. He was to be called for trial in the County Courthouse in Marion. On the morning of the trial Young came to town promptly. His entrance into the courtroom was spectacular. He

marched in at the head of fifty Klansmen in military order.

The Klansmen were armed like their leader, each with two revolvers and a repeating rifle. In addition they brought two machine guns.

Young gave crisp commands. With military precision the machine gun tripods were set up and the guns themselves mounted with their muzzles pointing, presumably by accident, at the jury box. Then Young's fifty Klansmen took up strategic positions in the courtroom.

The trial was brief and the verdict of the jury was acquittal. Young and his men marched out of the courthouse grinning.

Sheriff Galligan's answer to this was a telephone call to the governor of the state, asking for troops. He said that the activities of the Klan exceeded legal limits, that private citizens were assaulted without justification, private homes were searched without legal warrant; that public opinion in Williamson County was inflamed; that the mob action on the part of the Ku Klux Klan would at any moment bring mob reaction throughout Williamson County; and he asked for state troops.

The governor, with the county's bloody history in mind and with plenty of facts to back Sheriff Galligan's appeal, sent troops down to Herrin and Marion. And once more Williamson County quieted down—so long as the troops were there.

When after two weeks of quiet the militia left, Williamson County recovered its temper.

Cæsar Cagle, a Klansman and constable, had been issuing many a warrant of arrest against violators of the Prohibition Act. On the night of February 8, 1924, he was attending a meeting of his Klan group in Herrin. A knock sounded on the door and a man's voice called,

"Cæsar Cagle is wanted by Glenn Young!"

Cagle came to the door, with several friends following. In the street they saw a crowd of armed men. Before the Klansmen could slam the door shut firing began. Cagle collapsed with a bullet through his heart.

His Klan friends opened fire on those outside. Deputy Sheriff Layman was wounded.

The battle ended at once and apparently rather tamely.

Without opposition the Klan mates of Cæsar Cagle bore his body off to an undertaker's; and Deputy Sheriff Layman's friends carried him to a private hospital in Herrin.

The battle score was a Klansman dead and an anti-Klansman wounded, but not badly.

The score did not please Glenn Young when he got the news. This time it was Klan anger that spread by telephone not only through Williamson County but to Klan strongholds all over Franklin, Saline, and Jackson counties. It was the old Wil-



liamson anger fed by the fury of fanaticism and inflamed by the murder of one of their clan at the hands of militant sinners. The word was,

“Meeting at three this morning two miles south of Herrin. Come heeled!”

They came in two hundred autos from four different counties. They didn't bother with hoods and robes and burning crosses this time but brought everything in the way of firearms. Glenn Young was there to lead them with his machine-gun squad.

Promptly at three that morning they met and six hundred Klansmen swarmed into Herrin's deserted streets.

Herrin citizens woke to the sound of firing and looking out of their windows saw the street lights being shot out.

Glenn Young led his force to the private hospital where the wounded deputy sheriff, Layman, and his friends were. Young hammered on the door with the butt of his Winchester and his blows resounded through the building. Eighteen patients in the wards, already startled by shooting in the streets, were shocked by the thundering blows at their door. Voices from inside called out,

“What do you want?”

Young said, “Open the doors! We have warrants for the arrest of the murderers of Cæsar Cagle!”

Sheriff Layman and his friends were not unpre-

pared for this visit. By this time they had been joined by Mayor C. E. Anderson of Herrin and by Ora Thomas. A powerful voice from within made itself heard by Young and his men.

"This is a private hospital, closed for the night. You fellows are outlaws shooting up Herrin. You have made our patients hysterical and are endangering their lives. We are here to defend them. We'll give you five minutes to get out of range!"

Young and his men did draw back, but only enough to give them level aim at the hospital windows. Then they let loose with their guns. At first there was only the sound of splintering glass and the cries and shrieks of the patients.

Then from the hospital windows a burst of firing came. Obviously there were good marksmen and steady nerves behind those darkened windows. For although no Klansman was hit there was no mistaking the meaning of the closeness of the bullets to their targets. And the voice of Ora Thomas came in the silence that followed the volley.

"This is just a free sample," he called. "We've got a couple of thousand bullets more. Stick around and you can have them! In your guts!"

Punctuating the end of his sentence Thomas fired once. The bullet singed Glenn Young's hair.

Young was a leader by virtue of the coldness of his temper as much as by his daring. His men

raged at him to let them rush the building. He refused.

"I've got bigger game to bag first," he said. "Plenty of time to shoot these rats later. Meanwhile—" He assigned fifty Klansmen to maintain a cordon about the hospital.

Heading the rest of his Klan army he marched on to the city hall of Herrin. The locked doors were battered in. Into the building swarmed the Klansmen and S. Glenn Young entered and took charge of the office of Herrin's mayor.

Then from behind Mayor Anderson's desk he addressed the crowded room.

"Constable Cæsar Cagle, an officer of the law, in a peaceful meeting of his lodge is shot down and killed by the sheriff of the county. His murderers are given shelter and sanction by the mayor of this city. As an officer of the law myself, backed by the best citizenry of the county, I declare that a state of anarchy exists in the city of Herrin. I hereby assume office as chief executive. Sheriff Galligan of Williamson County is guilty of the murder of Cæsar Cagle and is therefore a fugitive from justice. I declare his office vacated by him and assume it as part of my responsibility. I call for volunteers for posses to capture the murderers of our fellow Klansman and to police this city. Every man who offers himself for service will be given a badge as deputy sheriff of Williamson County!"

He had to issue so many badges that a grocery was raided, canned goods were opened and the tin containers were cut up as badges for the hundreds of "deputy sheriffs" who volunteered.

The next morning citizens of Herrin were notified that they were "under martial law"; that Glenn Young was chief in Herrin's city hall; and they saw Klansmen patrolling their streets.

Sheriff Galligan had escaped in the night and motoring to Marion once more telephoned the governor of the state that troops were needed in his county.

Over the telephone he heard the word given for law and government to march again to Herrin.

Then he left Marion and was motoring through Carbondale, a Klan town, when its chief of police came out and held up his hand for Galligan to stop. Galligan did. The chief of police walked up to his car and thrust a heavy revolver through the window against Galligan's chest.

"I arrest you for the murder of Cæsar Cagle!" he said.

Galligan, always a man of discretion, gave up the wheel and was taken in his own car to Herrin where Young put him behind bars.

He did not stay there long, however. Motor lorries full of state troopers roared into Herrin soon after. Glenn Young and his henchmen were thrown

out of their offices and Herrin became quiet again, under martial law that was official.

While state troops enforced the peace in Williamson County, law and government once more went through the futile formality of trying to punish murder with justice. Men were arrested for the murder of Cæsar Cagle; others for the wounding of Deputy Sheriff Layman. Jury panels of Williamson County men were sworn in. A few witnesses were rounded up by the state. As usual Williamson County witnesses turned out to be men of poor memory. As usual the juries brought in verdicts of acquittal. True to its tradition the county asserted its right to murder, judge and execute without the formality of the law.

But now a force began to make itself felt in Williamson County which bothered it more than what the government could do; it was the law of economic determinism. It bore down on the offspring of the mountaineer breed with an inexorable pressure and it could not be shot at or gouged or stamped down.

Herrin was the trading center of a population of over seventy thousand and Marion, the county seat, also depended largely upon visiting shoppers. Both towns had prospered hitherto; and their citizens took their prosperity as a sign that God was in His heaven and all was right with their world. For generations the county knew that it was known outside as "Bloody Williamson"; but its inhabitants

are not given to worrying about what goes on outside of southern Illinois. For several years editorials all over the United States thundered at the county's flaunting of civilization; but those who read at all in Williamson seldom see anything but the local newspapers; and if now and then a local editor prophesied evil days for the county, it became the old story of a people deaf to its prophets.

Now, however, bothersome repercussion of the world's disapproval began to be felt by Williamson business men. Insurance companies demanded exorbitant premiums on policies asked for by Williamson residents. Banks tightened their purse strings when Williamson County business men needed loans.

Worst of all Herrin and Marion had acquired so bloody a reputation of late, even in "Bloody Williamson," that women from the surrounding regions became timid about shopping in these towns.

That hurt Herrin and Marion where they were most vulnerable, their pocketbooks. Business dropped off alarmingly. The pinch of economics became a pressure which bore down as relentlessly on pious Klansmen as it did on their unregenerate foes.

It was a pressure that eventually operated to iron out the differences between the warring clans. It made the question of bread and butter more immediate than that of liquor, more poignant than the hope of a future heaven or the fear of hell-fire.

Business men of both warring elements, con-

fronted by this danger in common, negotiated a truce. There had already been grumbling in Klan circles at the extent to which Glenn Young was draining Klan treasuries. Now they admitted that his activity was a drain on the community as a whole.

In accordance with the effort of Williamson business men to secure peace in the county the Klan announced that S. Glenn Young was no longer their leader.

In return for this concession the Klan element was promised that Deputy Sheriff Ora Thomas too would be dismissed from his post.

Abandoned by the leaders of the Klan, Glenn Young lost his "meal ticket" along with official standing. But the rank and file of the Klan still felt warmly for him. Nevertheless he would have to find his bread and butter outside the county.

It was a bitter dose for Young to swallow; but he had no choice; a living he had to make. He and his wife packed their belongings and left in their automobile bound for Chicago.

But he had sown so much violence in the county that he was not allowed to leave unscathed. As he and his wife were driving along near Herrin an automobile came rushing from the opposite direction. It came on so fast that Young at the wheel instinctively veered his car; he sensed an attack.

It came in rifle fire from the other car. Gunshot blinded his wife and wounded Young in the leg.

The other car escaped but Young later claimed he had seen and recognized two men who had done the shooting. He named Carl and Earl Shelton, brothers.

Young managed to drive his car to the nearest doctor where his wife and he were given first aid. Mrs. Young was examined and it was found that she was blinded for life. The doctor bandaged Young's leg as best he could; for Glenn Young was in a hurry; he was on the rampage again, avid for revenge.

From the doctor's office he called up some of his Klan friends and told them what had happened.

Half an hour later an automobile, supposed to be the one from which the Youngs had been shot, was stopped outside of Herrin and Carl and Earl Shelton were arrested. They were charged with assault on Young and his wife with intent to kill.

The car had been captured by Klansmen and was taken to the garage of Jake Smith, a Klan leader in Herrin. The Klansman did not trust Sheriff Galligan with the custody of the car, which was to be produced at the forthcoming trial of the Shelton brothers.

The unstable truce which Klan and anti-Klansmen had patched up was in a state of strain again; and it was not long before Williamson County was once more itself. Even though Glenn Young was out of the state and Ora Thomas in temporary exile, plenty of their lieutenants remained.



On August 30, 1924, several of Sheriff Galligan's deputies, accompanied by the Shelton brothers, went to Jake Smith's garage and demanded the Shelton automobile. It was part of the evidence to be used in a county trial and the deputy sheriffs pointed out that its custody belonged to the sheriff.

Smith was not unprepared for their coming and he had Klansmen with him. Both parties had fingers on gun triggers and the inevitable happened.

Both sides opened fire and when the battle was over seven men lay dead; Deputy Sheriff Bud Allison, Chester Reid, Otto Rowland, Green Dunning, Dewey Newholt, Charles Willard and John Deamster. The score was three anti-Klan, four Klansmen.

The two Shelton brothers, largely the cause of this outbreak, were in the battle but escaped without a scratch, later to play still more important rôles in Williamson County's recurrent tragedy.

Once again the county was thrown into a furor and once more the outside world was appalled at "Bloody Williamson."

Wholesale battle would have broken out again; but the cold unfeeling force of economics was there to cool the fever. The business men of Williamson County again took strong hold of themselves and of their inflamed neighbors; and for once they established quiet and order without the aid of state troops.

The Shelton brothers were brought to trial; just as previously, among other defendants, they had

been brought to trial for the murder of Cæsar Cagle. And as before, they were acquitted.

For five months peace maintained itself uncertainly in Williamson County and trade timidly ventured back into the towns. Glenn Young was in Minnesota. Ora Thomas was still in exile from the county.

Then one day in January, 1925, Glenn Young suddenly reappeared in Herrin.

He had a limp now and his face looked more deadly and pale than ever. His blind wife was with him. His coming affected Herrin like the gathering of an electrical storm. Anxiously he was asked what he wanted in the town. For he had his usual equipment of firearms; and there gathered to greet him many of his Klan friends.

"What do I want in Herrin?" he said grimly. "Well, let us say, first I want to make some money. I have many friends here and I mean to open a restaurant in Herrin. Then I may write a book; the story of my life; and Herrin is as good a place as any for me to write it." He spoke more truly than he knew.

He did open a restaurant and his Klan friends made it their headquarters.

Ora Thomas, in exile, heard of Young's return and took it as a sign for him to return too. He did.

He too brought with him and always carried

armament. Like Glenn Young he was ambidextrous when it came to shooting, and carried a revolver for each hand.

Herrin grew daily more uneasy. It was open knowledge that Glenn Young had come back with a grudge nourished by taunts about his leaving Williamson, by the acquittal of the Shelton brothers, by his wife's blindness, by his own limp and by the return of Ora Thomas.

It was a grudge too poignant to express itself in terms of a crusade; law enforcement, prohibition, Klan and anti-Klan, these were issues too impersonal to interest him now. At first it was the Shelton brothers he wanted to meet. But they were crafty gentlemen; and although they had their full share of the born killers' lack of awe in the face of death, their own or that of others, they had other preoccupations at the time and were not in Herrin.

Young had also been brooding over a gibe that was largely responsible for bringing him back to Herrin. "Glenn Young and Ora Thomas both left Williamson but Glenn left first—with Ora on his trail!"

Now that the two were back in Herrin, Young limped through its streets to give that gibe the lie. From Ora Thomas came no direct word. But a remark of his reached Young. "I admire Glenn in a way. I'll be glad to send flowers when his time comes. It's the least you can do for a man you bury."

On the afternoon of January 21 a session of the Herrin court had just adjourned and Ora Thomas, who was bailiff of the court, came out into the street accompanied by the judge and surrounded by a crowd which had been to see the trial. It was just after working hours and the street was full of men and women on the way home.

It may have been chance that just then Glenn Young and several Klan friends came along; at any rate he and Thomas were face to face before anybody else realized it. Both men clapped their hands on their pistol holsters; but neither drew his weapon; there were too many women and children in the line of fire.

Thomas's foxlike features crinkled with a smile. "Well, well," he said, "pleased to meet you, Mr. Young!"

Young limped past him without a word; and the crowd about the two recovered its breath.

They knew, however, that the breathing spell would not last long and the same evening Herrin men warned their wives and their children to stay indoors. They knew that Thomas's sly greeting was a concrete challenge and that Young's silence meant acceptance.

There were but few diners in Young's restaurant that evening, all Klansmen. Young sat by himself in brooding silence. On one side of the restaurant was an alley. The clock in the restaurant had

just struck half-past eight when in the alley resounded a shot.

As if the shot had been aimed at them, Young and his customers jumped from their tables and ran to the street, ready for battle. On a stone pillar just outside the restaurant was a fresh splash of lead. Otherwise there was no sign of an enemy.

Young buttoned up his coat and told his friends he was going for a stroll to the cigar store in the European Hotel, a hangout for anti-Klan men. Ora Thomas spent many of his evenings there. Several of Young's friends followed him.

The cigar store was kept by an Italian woman, Mrs. Biotti. She was serving a customer, Lige Green, a member of the local miners' union. He was an active anti-Klan man and was loudly talking about Glenn Young when Young himself stepped into the store.

Mrs. Biotti turned pale and hurriedly left the store by the back door that led to the lobby of the European Hotel. Lige Green at the sight of Young tried to follow her but Young stopped him. "Go on with what you were saying, Lige!" Young said.

Green kept still. In the street doorway stood two of Young's friends. Young barred the way to the back door and Green felt the atmosphere electrical.

The back door to the store opened and Ora Thomas stood there. "Anybody bothering you, Lige?" he asked quietly.

Young wheeled and got Green between himself and Thomas, his hands dropping to his pistols.

Thomas snapped, "Keep your hands up!"

It has never been settled which fired first. In an instant the store was full of shooting, Young and Thomas firing with both hands.

Glenn Young dropped his revolvers, caught at the edge of a cigar counter, then fell to the floor. One bullet had struck him in the right breast, another made a clean hit through his heart.

Thomas also fell to the floor but he continued shooting. He had need to. Though Glenn Young lay still, his friends in the doorway were shooting for him. Badly hit though he was, Thomas seemed still able to aim well. Two of Young's friends, Edward Forbes and Homer Warren, Klansmen, fell dead a few feet from their leader.

Several minutes later Thomas was himself dead.

Lige Green had miraculously escaped with only a scratch.

The fusillade of shots both brought a rush of spectators and kept them out of the store until it was all over.

Then policemen, Klansmen and anti-Klansmen came in to take charge of their dead.

Sheriff Galligan and A. M. Walker, Chief of Police of Herrin, immediately dispatched a joint telegram to Adjutant General Black, "Deeper trouble now than ever in Herrin. Sincerely believe

martial law is the only solution for the problem. Quick action is necessary."

Once again state troops marched into Herrin and dispersed heavily armed gatherings of Klansmen and anti-Klansmen.

The next day the first contingent of troops was reinforced strongly for the funerals of Young, Thomas and the two Klansmen.

Young's funeral was a picturesque and impressive occasion. Now that he was dead simultaneous services were held for him in three Williamson County churches and one town hall. Ministers and Klan leaders were eloquent in funeral eulogies over him. For example, Reverend I. E. Lee, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Herrin, said, "Conditions in Williamson County two years ago were almost beyond description; and were steadily growing worse. Dives were multiplying here and the county overflowed with the rankest of scofflaws, bootleggers, gamblers and prostitutes.

"Today the saloons are closed. The same may be said of the public gambling houses. All of the county's notorious roadhouses have been closed. . . . Who brought this change? If Williamson County had not had some of the best of the nation's citizenship she would have decayed beyond redemption. And while many have had a part in the work there is one name that comes to every mind first when they think of the Williamson County clean-up: S. Glenn

Young! A man who did his work thoroughly and made the supreme sacrifice in doing it. He has done more than any other one man to make law and order paramount in Williamson County."

Law and order stayed "paramount" at least for the funerals. Young was carried to the Herrin cemetery in a hearse drawn by six black horses wearing white Klan trappings. Immediately behind the hearse came the bullet-riddled automobile in which Young had been lamed and Mrs. Young blinded. The widow rode in the car now accompanied by her twin daughters by a former marriage.

Then in hundreds of automobiles and on foot came a procession of Klansmen in full regalia, robes, hoods and mourning and carrying plenty of American flags.

Troopers directed the traffic in Herrin and kept close watch to see that "some of the best of the nation's citizenship" did not unlimber the heavy equipment of weapons they had brought along.

At the cemetery amid pomp and oratory Young's body was buried near those of his two lieutenants.

The funeral of Ora Thomas was less impressive but just as grim. Not Klansmen but miners and Sheriff Galligan and his deputies followed the cheap casket in which Thomas was borne to the cemetery. Every mourner, except the dead man's mother, his



widow and his two children, carried rifles. In Sheriff Galligan's car a machine gun was mounted.

As the coffin was lowered into the ground the sheriff made a brief comment. "A man like Young lies in state in a church, and Ora Thomas is dumped into the snow!"

Reverend John Meeker of Herrin delivered an appeal almost as brief as the sheriff's speech. "Listen to me, men! Herrin is scorned by the world and rightfully so. I implore you to lay down your weapons and let peace come to this community. He who lies before us was not a religious man. I cannot praise him. Let us leave him with God and consider the living."

Reverend Meeker's appeal was backed by Williamson County's business men. Now that Glenn Young and Ora Thomas were both gone, there might be some hope that business would come back. First, however, peace must be established and widely advertised.

So the business men of Williamson County, Klan and anti-Klan, got together and engaged a high-pressure evangelist, Howard S. Williams, to come to Herrin "to persuade God back to Williamson County."

Herrin's big auditorium was given over to the revival meetings. Many Herrin stores bore placards in their windows, "This place is closed from 11:30 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. during Reverend Williams' prayer

meetings." Local newspapers carried verbatim reports of Reverend Williams' addresses. He spoke a language Williamson County business men like to hear from a preacher.

"I am a salesman of Christ," he said, "and a salesman must know his goods." He proceeded to "sell Christ to Williamson County." At every meeting the twenty-two hundred seats of Herrin's auditorium were occupied and men, women and children stood in the aisles. Few were on the streets of Herrin when Reverend Williams spoke. His parting words to Williamson County were in congratulation.

"Here in Herrin during the last few weeks, the weeks of our revival," he said, "hundreds who have hated one another, who have been drunkards, adulterers, bootleggers, pistol toters, crap shooters and booze hounds have hit the trail. . . ."

Williamson County press went ecstatic over Reverend Williams and the promise of peace he had brought. The *Herrin News* declared that "a new era was born in Williamson County." Business came back to Herrin and to Marion, when months passed without a shooting anywhere in the county.

A committee of the legislature of the state of Illinois came to Herrin, made an investigation, departed and reported to the world that "the population of Williamson County is now happy and peaceable. Old grudges have been forgotten and old hatreds have been buried in a spirit engendered by

*prayer meetings still held daily in the city's largest theatre."*

Glenn Young and Ora Thomas were buried in January, 1925. Reverend Williams left Herrin at the end of February. The legislative committee made its report in March. In April came county elections and what formerly had been a day of anxiety passed off in complete harmony, or at least without fighting.

For a whole year Williamson County basked in peace. Then as the April elections of 1926 approached it was seen that there would be eight different tickets in the field. The most coveted and important office to be voted for was that of sheriff of Williamson County. George Galligan had had enough of that office and was going back to work as a miner. Seven different factions put forth candidates for the office; and there was an eighth candidate.

He was Oren Coleman, a six-footer, built in proportion, a descendant of Williamson County's first settlers but informed with a breadth of vision unusual among his neighbors. He was educated in Williamson County's schools, graduated from the Southern Illinois Normal School at Carbondale, took his B.A. degree at the University of Illinois and went on for post-graduate work to the University of Chicago. His specialty was mathematics. Then he went back to Williamson County to teach

and eventually became principal of Marion Township High School.

He was a simple-mannered man, who never lost the look of his farm upbringing. He had thoughtful blue eyes, a firm straight nose, a straight mouth mild in repose, firm enough at other times; his jaws made good right angles and his chin was well modeled and had a cleft.

In his school days he was an all-round athlete and for relaxation he practised sharpshooting with a revolver and a Winchester rifle, winning several prizes in amateur rifle contests. When the Great War came he went to France and served with the Marines, taking part in considerable major fighting. After the war he returned to his work as principal of Marion Township High School.

As the elections of April, 1926, approached the thinking element among Williamson County's citizens found cause for anxiety in the fact that there were seven different factions putting forward candidates for sheriff and campaigning for them with increasing vehemence. The peace which Evangelist Williams had left behind him was being ruffled with violent campaign speeches, each party using fighting words and promising not to stop at words.

A committee of the most responsible citizens of the county called on the principal of Marion Township High School. They said to him in effect, "Mr. Coleman, you have made good in teaching our chil-

dren. Now you are more needed to teach law and government to their elders. We want you to run for sheriff of Williamson County on a non-partisan ticket."

Coleman had not partaken up to then in any of Williamson County's battles because he saw that the issues lay deeper than those over which his neighbors fought. It was because he saw where the real problems lay that he had chosen to teach the children of Williamson County.

Now he reluctantly realized that for the first time he was needed more outside the school house. If a sheriff should be elected who again would be only a weapon in the hands of some fighting faction, Williamson County would continue its wars, Klan and anti-Klan or into as bloody struggles along some other alignment. Coleman agreed to run.

His candidacy made the eighth ticket in the field. At once there rallied to his support a daily increasing number of the most intelligent element in the county.

Throughout the United States the Ku Klux Klan had been rapidly losing and Williamson County was no exception. Only the most bigoted and least enlightened element still clung to the mummary and to the spirit of the organization. What was left of it in the county, however, also kept alive, by the law of reaction, a hostile element of the also dying Knights of the Flaming Circle.

The Klan crowd tried to make political capital by loudly endorsing the candidacy of Oren Coleman. But Coleman announced that if elected he could not be counted upon by any of the warring factions.

He said, "I have no platform and I make no promises. But I want to keep on living in Williamson County and I want to be able to do so with a feeling that it is safe to live here."

April 13, election day in the county, began with fist fights in Herrin. Then Klansmen and anti-Klansmen began fingering their revolvers.

The garage of Jake Smith in Herrin, where in battle the year before seven were killed, was used as a Klan headquarters on election day.

Smith had been active at Herrin polling places challenging votes of opposing factions; and his lieutenants followed his example with good old Klan spirit. The result was that in several polling places fighting just short of shooting took place.

By noon fist fights were general all over Herrin.

Jake Smith and his lieutenants adjourned to his garage at noon for a war council.

They were deep in talk when a closed automobile came down the street toward the Smith garage, slowing up as it approached but it did not stop. The moment it was opposite the garage from inside the car came shooting.

The garage windows were smashed and Jake Smith's forehead was grazed by a bullet.

By the time he and his council had reached the door with drawn revolvers, the car was turning the corner.

Smith and his men and other Klansmen, summoned by telephone, piled into automobiles. Some of them carried machine guns. They scoured the city for the car that had shot up the Klan garage.

Anti-Klansmen saw the hunt and they too sent out armed parties.

The gathering tension broke in front of a polling place in Herrin's Masonic Temple. It began with a fist fight. The news spread by telephone. Heavily manned automobiles rushed to the scene.

Then machine guns and revolvers raked the fight from both sides.

The battle score ended exactly even. The dead were three Klansmen, three antis. The Klansmen were Marland Ford, Ben and Mack Sizemore. Their enemy dead were Deputy Sheriff Charles Briggs, Deputy Sheriff John Treadway and Deputy Sheriff Noble Weaver.

And while the votes were counted that night in Herrin there was quiet in the town; but only because state troops were again patrolling its streets.

The election results in Williamson County brought into office much the same breed as had held public office in the county hitherto; professional politicians, Klansmen and anti-Klansmen, some of them corrupt, most of them mediocrities, men who

brought little or no hope to Williamson County of a change in its story.

The one exception was the new sheriff of the county, Oren Coleman. He received more votes than the other seven tickets put together.

But he was not to be sheriff before the end of the year when his term of office would begin. That left Williamson under its old auspices for another eight to nine months. Much could happen in "Bloody Williamson" in such a period—and much did happen.

Just as vitiated blood is more hospitable to disease germs than is healthy blood, so "Bloody Williamson," even when its native fever seemed to be abating, by its lawlessness attracted kindred elements from the outside. An excerpt from the records of a gunman's trial in Chicago brings out this fact vividly. The gunman is on the stand and is being questioned.

"Q.—Why did you leave Chicago?

"A.—Well, I have been tipped that I was going to be put on the spot if I didn't lam it.

"The Court—'Put on the spot'? Is that new underworld slang meaning that you were to be 'taken for a ride'?

"A.—No, sir. That's different. When a guy is taken for a ride that means that there's maybe one or two fellows got it in for him and they croak him. When a fellow is 'put on the spot' that means that



all the gangs are after him—everybody that gets a chance has got to shoot at him. When a fellow is ‘on the spot’ he is out in the open—like a pool ball. I mean he ain’t got no gang behind him—no friends. I guess they got that ‘on the spot’ from pool.

“Q.—Where did you go from here?

“A.—I went down south—first to Cairo, then to Herrin. I knew a lot of guys in Herrin. Most of the birds here who have been ‘put on the spot’ drop down there to get out of sight. Hundreds of Chicago hoodlums are down there in the alky gangs and they do pretty well. (‘Alky’ is denatured alcohol cooked back to semi-potability.)

“Q.—Herrin is a sort of ‘Port of Missing Men,’ then?

“A.—Don’t know about that. That country’s filled with guys who would come up missing all right if they stayed in Chicago. I saw, I bet, fifty men down there who would have been killed if they stayed here.

“Q.—Quite a few Chicago hoodlums down there now, is that right? We might be able to find several witnesses in this case hiding out around Herrin, is that so?

“A.—You might! If a guy’s been in the beer or alky racket here and has to leave, he’s pretty certain to hit for the south—down around Herrin. It’s pretty good down there.”

It was this element that furnished Williamson

County with most of its liquor. Native talent owned and ran most of the roadhouses, the saloons, the pool-rooms and the gambling houses; the outsiders were the traveling salesmen of the industry. Native talent ordered the goods, the outsiders made the deliveries.

An industry so important had to have adequate protection from interference. So throughout Williamson and adjoining counties there were policemen, chiefs of police, deputy sheriffs, sheriffs, prosecuting attorneys and mayors engaged in easing the way of those in the liquor traffic. Some of the most active of these allies of the traffic were at the same time rabid leaders of the Ku Klux Klan.

This was the situation that awaited Oren Coleman, the future sheriff.

And just as Williamson County, after its long and bloody history, was hoping and literally praying that its unruly spirit might accept the ways of peace and civilization, there entered on the scene perhaps the most amazing figure in all its story.

Charlie Birger was born in New York's ghetto, an undersized superfluous gift to impoverished Jewish parents who had already more children than they could afford. Diminutive though he was he learned to walk, run and even fight sooner than most children. His face was small and eager and he had a high-strung vitality that reminded one of a little excited terrier. Mentally and in character he was precocious.

At the age of nine, for instance, when his father

had been out of work so long that there was no food in the house, Charlie listened, with contempt obvious on his vivid face, to the hunger lament of his family. Without saying anything he took a pillow slip and left the house.

He visited every neighbor in his tenement home and on the block, demanding food for his family. It happened that there was at the time a severe unemployment crisis, so Charlie got not a crumb by begging. Nevertheless he came home with an enormous apple pie he had stolen. He put it on the table and stood back to receive the admiration of his family.

Instead of applause there was an explosion from his father. "Take it back!" Mr. Birger roared. "Take it back at once, you thief!"

Charlie took up the pie; instead of returning it he proceeded to take big bites of it before the eyes of his outraged parents. He broke the rest in pieces and tried to make his brothers and sisters eat them.

His father reached for him but Charlie was hard to catch and escaped from the house.

He stayed out the whole night, while his distracted parents roused the neighborhood in search of him. It was rage they felt; and Charlie knew it. So he stayed out another day and a second night, until he decided that his parents were more alarmed than angry and would receive him as a prodigal son. He

came back to the house as if he were doing his family a favor.

His father did not see it that way and gave him the thrashing of his life. The moment he could wriggle out of his father's grasp the youngster was off again and this time he stayed out a week.

For food he stole choice groceries. As it was summer he slept where many New York east siders sleep in hot weather, on tenement roofs. Meanwhile he knew that he was having ample revenge; from nearby hiding places he could see his father and his mother as daily they went out to hunt for him.

Next time he came home—after negotiation through a neighbor—Charlie did not get a beating.

When he was old enough for public school he made more rapid progress there than his classmates. After school he sold more newspapers than most of his competitors of the same age and older. He dealt with competition by literally fighting it off; and there was something also terrier-like in his fighting, a snarling intensity of passion combined with sureness of attack. Worst of all for those he fought was that when he was most angry his mind worked most shrewdly.

What classroom education he got he owed largely to the activities of truant officers. Finally he left school before the law allowed and truant officers did not find him because he had left home as well.

The youngster's wits, his aggressiveness, that of

an undersized creature who wants to "show the world," and above all a greed for colorful living, won him a gayer time than he would have had under the restraint of his parents.

At seventeen he was already sensual and a rake. He won some women by his glowing restless brown eyes, vivid mouth, vigorous features; other women liked his domineering ways, still others the surprising strain in him of sentiment.

He served his apprenticeship in some of the most notorious gangs on New York's east side, until the Becker-Rosenthal murder shook New York gangdom to its foundations. Then he went to Chicago to continue his career.

But he had made a momentous decision. Let those who could do no better live by brute brawn; he had brains. Physical violence, from murder down, were good enough in self-defense; otherwise "strong-arm stuff" brought only retail returns for wholesale risks. Charlie Birger did not mind risk but he did want big returns. The big prizes go to men who organize and command other men. Birger determined to be a captain in life.

Then the Great War caught him in its dragnet; and although a private he learned in the trenches how a captain should handle men. When he came back to Chicago he was ready for leadership.

But also in the trenches there developed in him a craving for a home of his own, mating and off-

spring. As soon as he got back to Chicago he married a buxom unsophisticated Jewish girl. A year later came his first daughter, Charline. The following year he had another, Minnie. Both girls had their father's good looks and their mother's softness and sweetness of temper.

In Chicago Charlie Birger tackled the problem of finding a career that would satisfy his impatience for money and power and at the same time would not expose his family to dangers that would be his if he went in for a "strong-arm racket." He looked around, as he put it, "for a line of legitimate graft."

He decided for wholesale bootlegging. He wanted a territory of his own, where he would be boss. After a survey he chose Williamson County. This was in 1922, just before the Lester mine massacre. He went down to Williamson to study it at first hand. He bought a home in Harrisburg, just outside the county. His family must be near enough for him to enjoy it and at the same time sufficiently removed should trouble for him develop.

He got into the good graces of Williamson County by being one of the army that besieged the Lester mine though he kept out of the massacre. He made friends in anti-Klan circles by taking part in their war on the Klan.

At this period Glenn Young was active and the Klan was gaining power. Yet Charlie Birger decided

*that this was the time for him to enter business in Williamson County on a large scale.*

He went to Chicago and enlisted considerable capital. Then he interviewed the man, who, as head of the most powerful organization in the underworld of Chicago, controlled the bootlegging industry for all Illinois.

“How much for Williamson County?” Birger asked.

He got the territory at a reasonable price because Glenn Young made it a troublesome bailiwick; indeed Charlie Birger had chosen the moment to buy it for that very reason. The terms of “sale” insured Charlie Birger against competition by the Chicago crowd. But he would have to fight his own battles in Williamson County.

His next step was to recruit an organization. He gathered twenty-five of the Chicago emigré to Her-  
rin, “on the spot” men. His right-hand man was Art Newman, a squat, grinning gangster whom Charlie had known from boyhood on New York’s east side. In Charlie Birger’s cabinet Newman was to be head of the intelligence service as well as the chief of the fighting forces. In turn Newman’s right-hand man was Rado Millich, a Montenegrin, whose favorite weapon was a knife he could throw with precision.

Birger next looked about for Williamson County partners in his enterprise. He decided that the Shelton brothers, who were tried for killing Klan

Constable Cæsar Cagle and were charged with attempt to kill Glenn Young, were the men for his purposes. He called them for a conference.

Carl Shelton, the oldest of three brothers, was of old Williamson breed and representative of it, except that he never lost his temper. He was a huge, loose-limbed, tow-headed fellow, with sea-gray eyes. His brother Earl was smaller, dark and hot-tempered. At the interview the brothers waited for Charlie Birger to speak.

He outlined for them a picture of Williamson and adjoining counties organized for a monopoly in liquor and gambling. Chicago would see to it that no competition came from that quarter. Williamson County public servants, from policemen to mayors and prosecuting attorneys, were already "lined up" by Birger. Glenn Young and the Klan were sure to lose ground sooner or later.

"After that, boys," Charlie Birger said to the Shelton brothers, "the sky's the limit for us all in the way of kale! And I and you split even. What do you say?"

The Sheltons had a private conference; and said yes.

"Fine!" Birger beamed. Then his face changed. "But understand this: We specialize, get me? Legitimate stuff only."

By "legitimate stuff" he meant liquor and straight gambling.



The Shelton brothers agreed.

Birger had already established connections with a liquor syndicate in the Bahamas. Now he bought a fleet of iron automobile oil tanks and converted them. In a short time his organization was making regular shipments between Florida and Williamson County, delivering thousands of cases of liquor weekly. The Shelton brothers attended to the rum-running end of the enterprise while Birger did the organizing. He bought one roadhouse, another, a third; then began building more. He bought town saloons and made them agreeable hangouts for politicians.

Glenn Young and Ora Thomas killed each other off and the Klan went into a slow decline. Birger's business flourished.

But one day he learned that the Shelton brothers were dabbling in sidelines, train and bank robbery. Also a Harrisburg neighbor, who was good to Birger's family, telephoned him.

"For God's sake, Charlie, help me!" the man pleaded. "A bunch of Carl Shelton's gorillas stuck me up and took away my diamond. Now they want me to come across with a thousand dollars or I can't have it back!"

"I'm coming!" Birger said.

Alone and driving his speediest car Birger rushed to Harrisburg and in his neighbor's home

he found him backed in a corner by three of Carl Shelton's chauffeurs with revolvers.

"Where's the diamond?" Birger demanded.

One of the chauffeurs had it. "Here you are, Mister Birger," he said, handing it over. "Your friend can have it for one grand."

"Who says you can have the grand?" Birger asked.

"Carl Shelton," was the reply.

"Well, tell him to collect it from me!" Birger said, handing the diamond over to its owner. "Now you three, beat it! And tell Carl I want to see him at once at Shady Rest."

With unconscious humor Charlie Birger had thus sentimentally named his principal enterprise, a big roadhouse in Williamson near the Saline County line. It was a low rambling structure of twelve-inch logs, built like a fortress. In a strongly walled enclosure were a barn for cockfighting, a barbecue stand, a shooting gallery and parking space for scores of cars. In the main house were a dance hall and gambling rooms.

That evening Carl Shelton and his brother Earl came to Shady Rest for the interview with Birger. They brought with them ten of their chauffeurs and specialists in convoying liquor trucks.

More than a score of Birger's own men awaited them on the porch.

Birger said, "I want to see Carl and Earl only."

The Shelton brothers followed Birger into his private office. There he turned on them with a snarl.

"What the hell do you mean by disobeying instructions? Didn't I tell you to lay off strong-arm stuff?"

Earl Shelton's dark face flushed. "You can't talk to me that way, Birger!" he said.

"I'm not talking to you, you rat, only to your big brother!" Birger said. "Now get me, Carl! The next time I hear of you sticking anybody up, even for a penny, I break you! Is that plain?"

Even Carl, the cold-blooded, was moved. He came up to Birger and towered over him.

"Why, you dirty little Jew bastard," he said with slow venom. "Another word out of you and I'll break your neck!"

"You and who else?" Birger asked; and smacked Carl Shelton's face.

Carl did not do anything about it. In two doorways stood Art Newman, Rado Millich and a dozen of Birger's lieutenants watching the scene. A slow mirthless grin spread over Carl Shelton's flushed face.

"Looks like rain, don't it?" he said. "Well, Charlie, do we go now?"

"You go now!" Birger stormed. "And you go straight!"

As part of their equity in the partnership the Shelton brothers had a roadhouse known as Leslie

Theford's. The next day Art Newman, as chief of Birger's intelligence service, told him the Shelton brothers were fortifying the Theford place with iron plate. Also they had seized several of the rum-bringing oil tanks.

"That's a good idea!" Birger said. "Put iron plate all over Shady Rest and armor-plate my trucks and cars too. Wire Chicago for fifteen machine guns, and ten Tommies (Thompson sub-machine guns). Plant the woods around the Rest with machine-gun nests. Keep an extra guard on the electric plant." Shady Rest made its own electricity. "And see that we get plenty of juice for the big headlights around the house."

Both sides began by canvassing Williamson County's public servants for allies. Each side won among others, a mayor. Mayor Jeff Stone of Colp, a town west of Herrin, declared for Birger. Joe Adams, a huge 300-pounder, mayor of West City, took the Shelton side of the quarrel.

The first gun of the Birger-Shelton war sounded when Art Newman and his wife, driving in an armored automobile near Shady Rest, were fired on from ambush with machine guns. The armor plate saved the couple, except that Mrs. Newman was wounded in the leg.

The next night Theford's place, the Shelton headquarters, was gay with music and dancing. Suddenly the lights went out and from the road

machine-gun bullets poured into the roadhouse. In spite of the armor-plating on the house two customers were killed, Harry Walker and Everett Smith.

The following day Shelton allies among the county officials arrested Art Newman and two other Birger men for the murder of the two men. But the Birger element won the round. The coroner's jury at the inquest brought in the verdict that Walker and Smith had killed each other; a remarkable decision in view of the fact that both men were shot in the back.

The next two victims were Birger men. William "Highpockets" McQuay, a Birger machine gunner, was found dead in a Birger armored car, twenty-eight machine-gun bullets in his body.

Two days later the body of "Casey" Jones, head bartender at Shady Rest was taken out of a creek, also full of steel-jacketed bullets.

Charlie Birger found it hard to locate the Shelton brothers; so he addressed himself to Mayor Joe Adams of West City, as the man closest in touch with the enemy.

Birger got the mayor on the telephone. "I hear you're looking after Shelton interests," Birger said. "Take my tip and stop it at once or you'll make a bad insurance risk!"

The threat reached the Shelton gang.

The following night in Colp City, Jeff Stone, the mayor, who, it will be remembered, was Birger's

ally, was walking down its main street with the town marshal, James Keith, and a friend, John Milroy. An automobile dashed up and several men jumped out and confronted the three.

"Hand over your guns!" the leader of the strangers ordered.

Marshal Keith obeyed. The revolver was thrown into the car. Mayor Stone was outraged.

"You can't get away with this stuff in my town," he roared. "Give that gun back to the marshal!"

The spokesman of the strangers called out to those in the car. "All right, boys, let him have it!"

From the automobile a burst of machine-gun firing came and when it was over Mayor Jeff Stone and John Milroy were dead. The murderers fled in their car.

Decidedly the score was going against Birger.

But a week later three United States deputy marshals came on the scene and arrested the Shelton brothers, Carl, Earl and Roy. The charge was robbing a United States Post Office messenger of \$25,000 at Collinsville, Illinois, in 1924. For two years the government had hunted for the robbers in vain. Suddenly and unexpectedly they got information and a promise of enough testimony to convict the three brothers.

The Sheltons were released on heavy bonds and

sent out loud complaints that the whole charge was Charlie Birger's work.

Reporters flocked to ask Birger if this was true. Birger, always aglow when in the centre of the stage, cheerfully said,

"What I have told the Post Office Department isn't anything compared to what I'll tell on the stand when those boys come to trial!"

This answer was given wide publicity.

The next day those who kept guard over Shady Rest heard an airplane coming. It dipped low when it reached the roadhouse.

Three dark objects fell from the plane, two on the road, one on the roof of Shady Rest.

No harm was done; but the objects were found to be crudely constructed bombs, sticks of explosive bound about small bottles of nitro-glycerine; how they had failed to explode was a mystery.

Charlie Birger, however, was less interested in that mystery than in a coincidence that he noticed.

He remembered at Shady Rest that a motorcycle patrolman, Lory Price, supposed to be friendly to the Birger side, had left Shady Rest somewhat hurriedly just as the airplane was heard coming.

Several days later Patrolman Lory Price and Mrs. Price, his wife, disappeared. There were indications that they had not left of their own accord.

Then on the night of December 13, 1926, some

one knocked at the door of Mayor Joe Adams' home in West City. Mrs. Adams called out,

"Who is it?"

"We've got a letter for Mr. Adams," a man's voice said outside. "From Carl Shelton."

"Joe's asleep," Mrs. Adams said. "Let me have the letter."

"No," was the reply, "Carl said we were to give it to Mayor Adams right away and to him personally."

Mrs. Adams woke her husband and told him. He came to the door with an overcoat over his pajamas.

The moment he opened it revolver fire cut him down, killing him instantly. Those who had come "with the letter" disappeared before they could be seen by the Adams family

By this time Williamson County was in uproar again. War within the county was no novelty to its inhabitants; but it had always been war of their own making. This one was not a home product; and had modern improvements. Machine-gun nests were everywhere. Armored trucks roared up and down the highways. Corpses were found almost daily in different parts of the county. Williamson public officials, among them two of their mayors, were murdered. Machine-gun and airplane warfare was on. Where was the peace Williamson County had promised itself?

So widespread was the county's new fear that



Charlie Birger felt a feudal baron's solicitude for his panic-stricken people. He arranged to speak to the county from a southern Illinois broadcasting station. His speech was brief but his tone was reassuring. What this undersized product of New York's tenements said to the descendants of Williamson County's mountain stock was,

"My fellow citizens, you need have no fear for your lives. We know whom we are after. No innocent person will be bothered. I thank you."

A few days later in a swamp the body of the missing motorcycle policeman, Lory Price, was found. His wife was still missing.

It was at this time too that the new sheriff of Williamson County, Oren Coleman, quietly came into office.

Charlie Birger at once sent Art Newman to "see" the new sheriff. Newman came back and reported,

"That sheriff is smart. He didn't say a single word."

The Birger-Shelton war went on unabated.

The climax came on the night of January 8, 1927. Charlie Birger was away from Shady Rest at the time; but Steve George and his wife, caretakers, and two members of the Birger gang, Harry Sims and Elmo Thomassen were there.

At exactly three in the morning Shady Rest was blown up with dynamite. In the fire that then con-

sumed the iron-shelled log resort perished the four who were sleeping there.

Those citizens of Williamson who had looked to Sheriff Coleman to deal quickly with the new plague that had descended on the county, felt disappointed. The new sheriff was not saying much; but neither was he doing much. He seemed to be content to let the two gangs murder each other.

But soon after Shady Rest was blown up, Sheriff Coleman raided a noisy party in a Herrin hotel and arrested four young men and two of their women. The men were a lanky nineteen-year-old youth, Harry Thomassen, brother of Elmo Thomassen, and Ray Rone, Danny Brown and Izzy Hyland. They were all members of the Birger gang.

Sheriff Coleman arrested them for a petty hold-up, obviously only a drunken escapade. Birger was furious at the news that his men should be involved in a holdup. He did not seem to care what happened to Rone, Brown and Hyland. But he made every effort to get Harry Thomassen set at liberty.

Birger's efforts to get favors at the hands of law in Williamson would ordinarily have brought him results. This time he encountered difficulty.

Sheriff Coleman had become interested in Birger's anxiety to have Thomassen free. He saw to it that Thomassen was dispatched to Pontiac reformatory. Ray Rone, Danny Brown and Izzy

Hyland were also kept behind prison bars; but it was Thomassen who occupied Sheriff Coleman's thoughts.

Even before he became sheriff, Coleman had been interested in ballistic science, the microscopic analysis of bullet traces. Now he applied its technique in a study of Harry Thomassen's pearl-handled revolver, found on him at the time of his arrest. Coleman loaded the revolver and fired it. Under a microscope he studied the marks made on the shell by the firing pin and on the bullet by its passage through the revolver barrel.

He compared these characteristic and minute marks with those on the bullets in Mayor Adams' body and on the empty shells found outside the dead man's home on the night of the murder.

Then Sheriff Coleman went to visit Harry Thomassen in Pontiac reformatory; and talked to him in private, long and seriously

Meanwhile Charlie Birger was holding the center of the stage in court at Quincy, Illinois, where the Shelton brothers were on trial for post office robbery. Birger was the state's chief witness. The Shelton brothers were broodingly regarding him as he testified. He told the court that the Sheltons had discussed the plan to rob the Collinsville post office; that he had forbidden them to do it; that they did it just the same.

"You say you were friends with the Sheltons," the attorney for the brothers asked. "And now—?"

"Now we are not on such good terms," Birger smiled.

The jury believed Birger and found Carl and Earl Shelton guilty. The judge sentenced the brothers to twenty-five years in Leavenworth penitentiary. Carl Shelton listened to the sentence; then turned to Birger.

"You win *this* round, Charlie!" he said.

Nevertheless his lawyers appealed their case for review in a higher court.

Birger went back in triumph to rest up at his home in Harrisburg before resuming business—in peace—in Williamson County.

He had just settled down for a romp with his two daughters when Sheriff Coleman entered with Sheriff Pritchard of Franklin County. Pritchard said,

"Birger, I arrest you for the murder of Mayor Adams of West City."

Birger's children and his wife became hysterical. Birger quieted them with his smiling confidence. Then he said to his visitors friendly,

"I knew you were coming. I've got friends in Saline County and in Williamson and elsewhere. Influential friends."

Sheriff Coleman knew that only too well. He had prepared a warrant for Birger's arrest and found it hard to get action on the part of sheriffs, deputy

sheriffs, prosecuting officers, other state and county officials.

Birger went on amiably. "And I could have made it really hard for you boys. Let me show you."

He showed them machine guns mounted in the windows of his home and hidden by lace curtains. "But why should I shed innocent blood?" he asked. "I always did hate the idea."

He was lodged that night in Saline County jail. It was in charge of Sheriff Turner of Saline County.

Next morning when Sheriffs Coleman and Pritchard called at the jail to take Birger away they met an obstacle. They were informed by Sheriff Turner's deputy that his chief had gone out of town that morning; and he had left instructions that Birger was not to be moved from the jail or even disturbed.

And the visitors found Birger in his cell amply equipped to deal with anyone who should try to disregard Sheriff Turner's instructions. A revolver was in Birger's hand and a machine gun was set up in his cell.

It was two days before Sheriff Coleman succeeded in having Birger removed to the jail at Benton.

All this time Coleman had also been busy rounding up members of Birger's gang. Rado Millich, knife-throwing lieutenant of Art Newman, was

among those he arrested. Art Newman himself had vanished.

Doggedly Coleman kept on his trail. Eventually Newman was traced to a bungalow in Long Beach, California, and arrested.

He was extradited and brought back where Sheriff Coleman could talk to him at length. Art Newman had his own kind of shrewdness; Coleman told him little but Newman deduced much. The gangster thought things over; then said,

“Sheriff, I’ll make a dicker with you. You help me and I’ll help you.”

Coleman said, “I can only promise you your full legal rights. You’ll have to take your chance with judge and jury.”

Soon after this interview Charlie Birger found that neither machine guns in his cell nor friends in office and elsewhere were able to save him from being put on trial for his life.

Art Newman had made a confession. In it he stated that Mayor Joe Adams had been murdered by Harry Thomassen according to instructions given him by Newman and Charlie Birger. His confession also charged that Motorcycle Policeman Lory Price and his wife were murdered on order by Birger and himself. He then told where the body of Mrs. Price, still missing, had been buried.

Her body was found where Newman said it was, under débris in an abandoned coal mine.

Williamson County was impressed but not too much. It had seen too many strong cases against men charged with murder collapse more or less mysteriously. True the county had a new kind of sheriff; but friends in office could do much for an accused man, and Charlie Birger's friends were many and powerful.

He was placed on trial in the County Courthouse at Benton. Art Newman was the chief witness against him.

All through the trial Birger's two young daughters and his wife sat by his side. His family lavished tenderness on him, he on them, as if they were at ease in their home in Harrisburg. Whatever Birger thought of the future that awaited him, his behavior with his family showed no sign of worry.

The case closed. The jury listened to the judge's charge; then it retired for deliberation.

It was only then Birger asked that his daughters be sent out of the courtroom.

"No time for noncombatants now!" he said grimly.

The jury reentered the courtroom. The foreman read the verdict.

Charlie Birger was found guilty of murder in the first degree.

Mrs. Birger fainted.

Birger's face did not change much; he seemed to have known what was coming.

"Well, war is war!" he whispered to his attorney. Then he turned to the judge. What he said came like a cry.

"I give you my word, judge, murder was never in my heart!"

The judge seemed to be moved but had no alternative. He sentenced Birger to be hanged.

Birger walked back to his cell firmly. There he seemed to realize for the first time that this life he had loved with such zest was drawing to a close. The realization came with such a shock that he threw himself against the bars. He cried out like a trapped creature. He raved. He beat his head against the stone walls.

Then he became calm again and stealthy. In the course of two weeks twice he tried to kill himself. Once he swallowed poison that had been smuggled into his cell. The very excess of the dose defeated his attempt. Again he tried to hang himself on a rope he made of strips of clothing. A keeper cut him down in time.

The second failure seemed to send strength through him; he recovered his spirits amazingly. He asked to have his family visit him and played with his children as if he were home again.

Meanwhile Sheriff Coleman had also brought to trial Rado Millich. In a quarrel Millich had killed Ward Jones, another member of the Birger gang.

Millich too was found guilty and sentenced to be



hanged. The date of his execution was October 26.

Then Williamson County saw a novel, grim sight. Gallows, borrowed from a neighboring county, came to Williamson. It was set up in the prison yard at Marion.

Williamson County saw at last a man, Rado Millich, hanged for murder.

The day came when it was Charlie Birger's turn in the Marion prison yard to mount the borrowed gallows. That morning he had dressed in his best and Birger's wardrobe was one of his enthusiasms. His hair was meticulously brushed, his shoes brightly polished. He himself was as gay as his dress.

As he mounted the platform he saw below in the silent crowd faces he knew. "Hello, Bill!" he called. "Hello, Tom! How are you, Harry?"

He shook hands with the hangman. Then he looked up at the clear sky and the sunlight. His lips parted.

"It's a *beautiful* world!" he cried.

And the smile of his face in the last moment of his life has made one of the most remarkable newspaper photographs ever published.

Art Newman and three others of the gang were given life sentences.

With the hanging of Birger and the imprisonment of the others, Williamson County seemed to quiet down.

Sheriff Coleman, however, was still busy. Though

the Birger-Shelton war was over he was gathering evidence against former allies of both sides, especially those who were still holding public office.

The first to be caught in the new net Coleman wove was Arlie O. Boswell, Klan leader and Williamson county prosecuting attorney. He was sent to prison for two years for conspiring in the traffic of liquor. Then in February, 1929, the mayor of Herrin, Marshall McCormick, and its chief of police, John Stamm, were also sent to prison for two years for a crime similar to Boswell's.

The Shelton brothers, by a series of remarkable legal victories, escaped prison. In the fall of 1929 Carl Shelton was again arrested, this time for driving a stolen automobile; and again, because the jury disagreed, he escaped prison.

For two years since Sheriff Coleman came into office, outside the Birger-Shelton war, there has not been a murder in Williamson County. Some of its citizens are beginning to hope that what *The Herrin News* wrote was perhaps coming true:

"Believing in the brotherhood of man, and the fatherhood of God, Williamson County is steering by a compass pointed at the Star of Bethlehem, back to a sane, sensible, modern civilization. . . ."

But that editorial appeared on July 10, 1925; and was followed by nearly a score of unpunished murders. And as recently as March, 1929, in the

Herrin primaries, no one could be found willing to run for the office of mayor of Herrin. It would seem, therefore, that Williamson County is none too sure of its salvation.

## XI

### THE WOMEN OF NAGYREV AND TISZAKÚRT

**E**VEN so sophisticated a poet as Swinburne was lyrical in his love of children, the charm of their naïveté; and an adult who retains a child-like simplicity of nature may prove charming. We discount a child's greeds and rages because they are so fleeting. But suppose a nature child-like in its simplicity feels lusts and hates and has an adult's power to do something about it. . . . The story that I have chosen as the most remarkable of a selection of outstanding crimes of the year, deals not only with one such individual but with the women of at least two villages. It would stand out as a story in any period in the history of crime; not only because in itself it covers almost a quarter of a century; but also because it would be hard to match it for the basic simplicity of its psychology and at the same time the wide range of its drama.

In Hungary, about sixty miles from the capital, are two farming villages, Nagyrev and Tisza-

kurt. They are twenty-five miles from the nearest railroad; in winter they are snowbound; even late in the spring they are cut off from the world by floods and the deep mud of their primitive roads. Telephones and telegraph communication are little known here.

The people of the region toil over a stubborn soil; and poverty and brutal labor form the lives of the men and the women of the villages. Also the farms are small; and so walled in is the region by rich men's large estates that no peasant can hope to increase his land holdings. On the contrary, at the death of a farmer each of his children usually inherits only a fraction of what little land the father owned. The more children a family has the more bitter the subsequent struggle for existence. So, aside from other complications that often accompany pregnancy and its consequences, the prospect of another childbirth is not always a welcome one to a family in Nagyrev and Tiszakurt.

It is a grape district and much of the raw inferior wine it produces is drunk up by the men of the villages. Regularly on Saturday nights and on religious holidays the men of Nagyrev and Tiszakurt get drunk; and regularly they beat up their women.

We are now prepared to understand something of the attitude of the women of Nagyrev and

Tiszakurt toward the prospect of more maternity and toward their men.

About forty years ago there came to live and practise in Nagyrev a midwife, Susi Olah. Even as a young woman of twenty she was stout, slow-moving, impassive. Her face and body were a mass of fat-folds. Her small vividly black eyes were inscrutable, almost hidden; they scarcely moved behind their lowered lids.

She had studied the rudiments of midwifery at some city hospital. At the same time she had learned how to be of use to an expectant mother who did not want her baby born. In Nagyrev and Tiszakurt she was called upon sometimes to help a child into the world; at other times she was appealed to as an abortionist.

There were other midwives at first in these villages. The others were more timid than Susi, it seems, for they hesitated at helping abortions, whereas Susi did not. Thereupon Susi's power and popularity among the women of Nagyrev and Tiszakurt grew.

Abortion was against the law but Susi took the risk of the law's punishment. As it turned out it was not much of a risk. There were no doctors in the region and midwives were the only "medical" help available, even in illness that had nothing to do with pregnancy. When Susi's ministrations

turned out fatally for the patient there was only the "halotkem" to diagnose Susi's mistakes.

This official's procedure with a body was simple. He held a feather before the mouth and nostrils. If the feather did not stir it meant that life in the body was really extinct and the "halotkem" issued the certificate of death. The cause did not much matter; and he put it down as one of three or four of the most commonly known of fatal maladies, heart disease, apoplexy and the like.

For a long time the "halotkem" was the village bell ringer; he was also Susi's son-in-law. It is understandable therefore that the death certificates he issued did little to undermine Susi's medical reputation.

Nevertheless so active did Susi become as abortionist that as many as nine of the deaths she had caused became public knowledge.

The agencies of the law in these villages move slowly and their devices are naïve; but since the villagers themselves are simple in what crimes they are moved to commit, the law sometimes catches up with a culprit there. At such times legal retribution strikes the fear of God and government into the hearts of the community.

Nine times Susi was arrested and tried for fatal abortions. Each time she was acquitted for lack of legal proof. Nine such victories made Susi more impressive to the villagers than the law. More than

ever women in trouble turned to her for counsel and aid.

Nevertheless in the course of years so many women in Nagyrev and Tizsakurt died of abortion at Susi's hands that even she was moved to contemplation. Alone in her home one day she was pondering the problem, at first without outcome. Her eyes wandered and she became interested in the spectacle of several flies on a sheet of flypaper struggling against their doom.

Her thoughts may have found at first something humanly symbolical in this sight of living creatures lured by sweetness to entanglement and agony. Then her thoughts became less abstract. She wondered why the flies died so soon on the flypaper.

She investigated and found out that the flypaper was treated with that very effective poison, arsenic.

That gave her an idea; an epic idea, as it developed. Given a couple caught in nature's trap of sex and conception, why could not flypaper—since human beings should be more intelligent than flies—be the agency of helping a couple to *escape* the complication of parenthood? Peasant women are not much afraid of the ordeal of childbirth. Then why not let nature take its course with an unwanted pregnancy; let the child be born; and then dispose of it?

Susi found—after experiment—that fresh



flypaper soaked in water made a liquid slightly discolored but most potent if given internally. A little of the liquid in an infant's food would be enough. Infants are fragile things anyway and when they died soon after birth, why, often there was grief; but who was likely to call in the police, especially in Nagyrev and Tiszakurt?

The next woman who came to Susi with her trouble of unwanted pregnancy was told of a new and safer way out—safer for the mother. Susi's charge for a bottle of slightly discolored liquid was moderate. Her instructions were simple.

Infant mortality in Nagyrev and Tiszakurt increased. So did Susi's following. Rival midwives lost ground in the two villages; and began to suspect why, though they had no proof. That did not keep them from feeling bitter against her and they did not repress their grievance. This created talk that did not do Susi any good.

Susi Olah went to see her competitors. She assured them that their suspicions of her were unwarranted. Besides, she pointed out, there was really enough business for all the midwives in the village, provided they got together on a plan of regional division she had worked out, whereby each midwife would have a fair amount of territory within which no other midwife would accept cases. As evidence that she was sincere in her proposal Susi asked for herself the least prosperous of these districts.

The proposition seemed fair and one by one the other midwives began to think that perhaps they had done Susi injustice. The conference took place at first in the homes of the other midwives. Then Susi invited them to her home for tea and talk.

She had only four competitors to deal with; and they did not last long. One by one they were overtaken by mysterious maladies and died. Susi's son-in-law, the "halotkem," ascribed natural causes to their deaths.

More than ever Susi loomed in the villages as an awe-inspiring power. The fates seemed to be working for her and for those who came to her for help. She became known as Aunt Susi, so often was she called in to advise on intimate family concerns.

She too must have felt herself a mistress of destiny, for she let nothing stand in the way of her desires. She was no beauty but she had strong appetites; and her husband, an ailing nobody as a man, did not please her as a lover. He died rather suddenly. The "halotkem" wrote his death down to "pneumonia."

But she had a son, a young man who suspected the real cause of his father's death. The son had loved him and hated his mother. Bitter quarrels between mother and son followed the father's death. The son's rage grew. Then one day after a meal he was seized with violent stomach cramps. He now

suspected their cause and thinking he was about to die decided to avenge both himself and his father.

Susi happened to be out of the house when the son was overtaken with pains. He took a revolver and went hunting for his mother. He met her in front of an inn. Before a score of villagers he pointed the revolver straight at his mother and fired.

She remained standing—unhurt.

He fell to the ground in agony.

He did not die. But so frightened of Susi was he now that as soon as he was able to walk at all he fled from the district.

The incident created a remarkable situation in Nagyrev and Tiszakurt. The men in their crude minds suspected that Susi's son had some real grievance against his mother and sided against her; also they began to fear her. They told their women to beware of Susi. But the women of the two villages sided with her.

In backward ingrown communities like Nagyrev and Tiszakurt life under brutal pressure becomes brutally simplified. The poverty in the region afforded the men nothing but their muscles with which to solve their life problems. With their muscles they tried to wrest a living from the soil and with their fists they solved, or tried to solve, all other difficulties. A man could fight back another man with his fists. A woman had no such weapon when her man beat her. She had to use wile and wits.

The women of Nagyrev and Tiszakurt had neither to any great extent. But they could and did band together against their men; and they had Susi to advise them. A sort of unorganized but strongly felt bond developed among the women of Nagyrev and Tiszakurt. They had oppressors in common, the need in common to defend themselves against their men; and they had a leader of whom even the men were afraid. There was no longer any reason why the women should let the men have it all their own way.

What simplifies life under conditions of brutality is that sentiments go, appetites remain. Love goes, lust stays. Fidelity, family feeling, the sacredness of life become mere abstractions before the drive of such elementals as sexual passion. When a man of Nagyrev and Tiszakurt wanted a woman he went after her, whether she belonged to him or not.

Now under Susi's leadership and banded together as they were, the women went at life much as their men did. If a husband proved less a desirable than a lover the women did as Susi did; they went after lovers. The women were not much more attractive than was Susi; but the men were not exacting. Lovers were not hard to get.

Husbands found women other than their wives more available than ever; bachelor Don Juans encountered increased competition; but it seemed to be no trouble for any man to find willing women. Conversely the husbands and lovers found their own

women increasingly unfaithful to them. That was something to be seen to; and the men attended to this complexity in the only way they knew, using their fists and feet on their women.

Now, however, if a husband or a lover made life too hard for a woman; or even if his mere existence stood in the way of a fresh love affair, the woman would put on her black shawl and go to see Aunt Susi. There was usually not much need for talk on such occasions. Susi knew fairly well the situation in almost every family in the two villages and did not need to be told what the visitor wanted.

According to what supply she had on hand at the time and in proportion to a woman's financial means Aunt Susi would charge more or less for a small bottle of liquid distilled from flypaper. The price ranged from 100 to 1500 pengoe, equivalent roughly from \$17 to \$250. Sometimes when a woman was desperately poor Susi charged nothing at all.

Among those whom Susi did not charge was a woman who wanted to get rid of her husband because there was a more desirable lover in view. Susi charged her nothing for the remedy to the situation because the husband was only a short while before a transient lover of Susi's, too transient for Susi's pride.

It was Susi who planted the grim harvest in Nagyrev and Tizsakurt, a harvest increasingly plentiful for twenty years; but it would be short-

sighted to ascribe it solely to her. Seed needs soil; and Susi's efforts would have come to little were not the women of Nagyrev and Tiszakurt ready for her. Most women came to Susi for "medicine" of their own accord and some came more than once.

So that after the first few years of Susi's ministrations in these villages the story there became less that of an individual than of a sisterhood in action. For a score of years men all over Nagyrev and Tiszakurt died with a suddenness inexplicable to the other men. A laborer in the fields would eat his lunch and soon afterward he was overtaken by agony and death. A husband at home ate or drank something that should not have proved fatal but did. In a village inn three men paid with their lives for a mild drinking bout. And so it continued.

Naturally one wonders how could all this have gone on for twenty years without the men of the villages suspecting. The answer lies partly in the low average of intelligence that has prevailed among these men; but only partly therein. From Aristophanes to our own times thinkers have played with what seemed only a speculative question, what would happen if the women of a community conspired against the men? In Nagyrev and Tiszakurt the speculation became a fact. The result explains how such a state of affairs could have persisted there so long without retribution.

Some suspicion, of course, there was among the

men. Formless rumors, fantastic distortions created a state of mind among them, the more disturbing because the course of catastrophe in the villages was so erratic. Just as the men had about decided that mysterious deaths came only to husbands and lovers, there came to confuse them a crop of deaths among ailing old people; or sickly children; or among men whose only rôle to others was that they were harsh employers.

Susi Olah was, of course, under suspicion; and the burgomaster of Nagyrev braced himself for action against her. He went to her home and towered—he was a big man physically—over the fat figure in her oak armchair. He laid down the law to her, cited rumors and demanded that she rid his village of her presence.

Susi appeared to doze all through his arraignment. When he had finished she looked at him, her eyes the merest glimpses of black between folds of fat.

“Burgomaster”— She stroked an overfed cat in her lap as she spoke. “In your place I would first look for culprits nearer home than Susi Olah!”

The burgomaster’s married life was none too happy and Susi’s words shot terror through him. He stammered a few more threats; but Susi went to sleep as he spoke. The man left her house shaking with fear; and thereafter he took pains to let Susi

know that he was minding his own business as far as she was concerned.

The Great War came and many of the men of the two villages went to face more visible dangers than those at home. Many of them were killed in the fighting. With the coming of peace some of the others returned sound in limb, others came back wounded.

The first man in Hungary to be blinded in the war was a young Nagyrev farmer. He was formerly one of the handsomest men in the region. Now his wife had a helpless tragic figure on her hands, an economic burden, a source of depression to her spirits. The situation did not long endure. The war had not changed the women in Nagyrev and Tiszakurt.

Cut off from the world though the region was, this wholesale killing off of men by the women of these villages could not continue indefinitely without some rumor of it reaching more sophisticated police agencies than the local gendarmerie. For one thing many of the women were so crude in their crimes. In 1924 something occurred that brought at last a concrete case for the authorities to deal with.

In that year a Tiszakurt woman, Mrs. Bulenovenski, was heard complaining what a burden to her was her seventy-year-old mother, Mrs. Purris. Shortly after these complaints the old woman was seen no more.



A few weeks later her body was found in the river near Tiszakurt. Near the spot of the discovery the police saw the tracks of a wheelbarrow, still visible in the dried mud about the river bank. The wheelbarrow itself was found. It was easily traced as belonging to Mrs. Bulenovenski.

Here at last was something concrete, an incarnation of the terror that had stalked the region hitherto as elusively as the figures of a nightmare. The body of the old woman was examined for poison and arsenic was found.

Mrs. Bulenovenski was tried for the murder of her mother. She was found guilty—the first woman to be brought to justice in Nagyrev or Tiszakurt since the coming there of Aunt Susi Olah. The judge at first sentenced Mrs. Bulenovenski to death; later the sentence was changed to life imprisonment.

The trial and its outcome made new history in the two villages. The men knew now more definitely what they had to fear. The women for the first time also found something to fear.

From then on poisonings in the region diminished considerably. But retribution, long in coming, seemed to be moving into the villages whose women had for so long a time seemed immune to it.

In July, 1929, the Calvinist pastor of Tiszakurt came to the home of one of his parishioners, Mrs. Ladislav Szabo, to talk seriously to her. He told her that persistent rumors charged her and her

husband with getting rid by poison of two of their dependent old kinsmen, Mrs. Szabo's father and her uncle.

Mrs. Szabo eyed the pastor obliquely. Then she began to weep. "How can you believe such things of me? I couldn't be so cruel. It is all a malignant lie. Tell me, pastor, what to do to answer these calumnies?"

She seemed in real distress and the pastor questioned her long and closely. Her answers came between sobs and he tried to calm her. She brewed herself some tea to quiet her nerves and asked the pastor if he too would have some with her. He said yes. She went into the kitchen to bring him his tea.

He drank it. That night he was seized with convulsions. Fortunately for him a doctor, an old schoolmate on vacation, was visiting him; and a stomach pump saved the pastor's life.

The pastor said nothing more to Mrs. Szabo.

Some weeks later Nagyrev and Tiszakurt were celebrating the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul. There were music and dancing in the streets. The men and the women wore gala peasant dress. Drinking had become general and a contagion of crude gaiety made a festival picture in and about the villages.

Suddenly a rumor of calamity stilled the celebrating. It began with the spectacle of a body of police marching on some errand that was obviously

not in holiday mood. They stopped in front of the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ladislav Szabo. A few moments later the couple was brought out into the street.

From woman to woman in the two villages flew the whisper that the Szabos were arrested. Song died on women's lips. The men wondered at the pallor they saw everywhere in women's faces.

Meanwhile a crowd was forming in front of the Szabo home. The police were questioning the couple, in the open air, before their crowding neighbors.

The Szabos were appalled. They had much on their conscience. They were not prepared for an ordeal. Under the pressure of police questioning, before the eyes of their neighbors, many of whom looked at them accusingly and with seeming knowledge of their crimes, the nerves of the couple gave way.

Publicly they confessed that they had poisoned the two old men with whose deaths they were charged. Then in their panic they began to defend themselves by accusing others, neighbors, of similar crimes.

Among those the Szabos named was Susi Olah.

From house to house marched the police, making arrests, all of them women. Where gipsy music and song had sounded throughout Nagyrev and Tiszakurt, there now were screams and lamentation.

In the contagion of fear and hysteria five women broke down and confessed, as did the Szabos.

Scores of prisoners were marched down to the river and taken by boat to Szolnok, the seat of the regional court.

Susi Olah was taken there under special guard.

In Szolnok the cases were taken in hand by more experienced investigators than were the police of Nagyrev and Tizsakurt.

Susi was among the first to be questioned. She proved a wary suspect. The district-attorney, Dr. Kronberg, did not seem to get much satisfaction out of his interview with the fat old woman.

Finally he told her he could find nothing against her that would justify keeping her any longer under arrest. She was free to go.

Susi Olah wrapped her black shawl about her fat body and waddled down to the boat which took her back to Nagyrev. She brooded by herself in a corner of the deck and nobody on board seemed to know that she was the central figure of the wholesale arrests that had now startled all Hungary.

The moment Susi got back to her village, even before she entered her home, she set out on a tour of visits to women in Nagyrev and Tizsakurt. It was only after she had warned scores of them to keep their mouths shut, that Susi went to her house for a needed rest.

She sat down in her oak armchair and remained

there without moving. Then sounds from down the street brought her to the front window.

She saw police enter every one of the homes she had visited on that street and drag off under arrest screaming women.

Susi also saw that her own house was surrounded by police.

She knew then that she had not been so superior in wits to the men. They let her come back to the villages in the expectation that she would do precisely what she did do. All the time she thought she was unobserved she had been under police surveillance.

A slow, bitter smile touched the lips of the old midwife as she saw the police outside her garden hedge try to look inconspicuous. She had to admit to herself that she had been stupid; but she was not so stupid as these half-visible detectives. Evidently they expected her to go out again to visit more of her clients. If so they would have long to wait.

They did wait long for her to come out again; so long that finally the detective in charge of the squad outside her home decided to re-arrest her without further delay. At the head of several men he entered Susi's living room. He did not find her there. They searched over most of the house in vain and were beginning to think that by some mysterious device she had actually made her escape.

She did escape them in a sense. They found

her in a clothes closet, where she had hanged herself.

Thirty-one women and three men accomplices were placed on trial in Szolnok for the arsenic poisonings in Nagyrev and Tiszakurt. The trials took up most of the spring and the summer of 1930. A detailed account of the proceedings would make volumes interesting, not only as variegated drama but as studies in psychology exceptional for its primordial simplicity. For instance, the judge in one of the trials was questioning a sixty-five-year-old woman, Mrs. Lipka, who was charged with four deaths by poisoning.

"Did you ever attend church?" he asked.

"I went to one for the first time when I was thirty-seven years old," Mrs. Lipka replied.

"Do you know the Ten Commandments?"

"No."

"Do you know that one should not kill?"

"I don't know much about church matters," Mrs. Lipka said.

"But you have murdered four human beings! Don't you know that is a terrible thing to do?"

"I did not murder them," was the reply. "I did not stab them or drown them. I only gave them water in which I had soaked some flypaper."

Five of the women held for trial followed Susi Olah's example and took their own lives. Several were sentenced to death. Others were given life im-

prisonment. A greater number are serving terms in prison ranging from five to twenty years.

Today in Nagyrev and Tiszakurt there are streets in which every home mourns or misses one or more women whom retribution has overtaken. But it is doubtful if the manifold tragedy that has played itself out in these two villages for so many years has made life there any more intelligible to those who have gone through that long and terrible purgation.

And since then two more villages in Hungary, Szentes and Kalosca, have reported epidemics of arsenic poisonings.

## XII

### CHICAGO CONTRIBUTES

**S**OME years ago Chicago, the world's greatest railroad center, dug its Sanitary Canal; and at the time some citizens of Chicago wistfully hoped that the canal and its name would prove symbolic of what might happen to the city spiritually. But the Sanitary Canal has not lived up to the image its name suggests; tugs churning through its waters too often bring to the surface disagreeable surprises.

A number of these finds in the Canal have had several things in common; the bodies were bullet-riddled; they were dressed in the special tailoring favored by gentry who get money fast and spend it faster; and in the pockets were found cash in sums ranging from \$800 to \$1,500.

Chicago is accustomed by now to such finds not only in its waters but in every part of its city, not excluding its busiest centers. For the last seven years, for instance, the average for the city has been more than one murder a day—*discovered*. About 500 of those whose murder was brought to



light wore the prosperous raiment of men who had thrived in the underworld; and totalling up the cash discovered in the pockets of these dead gangsters, we get a sum just over \$500,000.

It is a fair assumption that these gunmen were dispatched by fellow gunmen. If the latter did not rob the pockets of these opulent dead it was because in many cases—incredible as it may seem—the murderers must have felt themselves above pilfering mere “C’s” and “grands,” thieves’ argot for units of hundred and of thousand dollars.

That such a scorn is not mere supposition is indicated by the fact that in a number of cases where murdered gunmen were found lying in Chicago streets, the police discovered both considerable sums of money intact in the pockets—and in the dead hand had been placed a nickel or a dime. The small coin is the gangster’s symbol of what he thinks of his victim.

Many of these murders were planned and executed with an impressive indifference as to what the citizens of Chicago may feel or do about the matter. As I have said, murdered gunmen have been found in Chicago’s busiest centers, the Loop for instance, cut up by machine guns, often in the hours of greatest traffic. Well, gunmen are not afraid of mere street crowds. But would they dare do their work in the sight of police?

An instance will answer this and we will let a

Chicago newspaper tell what happened on that occasion.

“Chicago gunfighters almost achieved the ultimate in assassination yesterday, when they silently encircled the Detective Bureau and waited patiently for the opportunity to kill Joseph Aiello, hitherto only a modest claimant to gang honors. Aiello had been brought to Police Headquarters for questioning.”

The newspaper account went on to say that while the detectives were busy with Aiello a policeman happened to look out of the window. He saw a number of taxis arrive in front of the Detective Bureau with about twenty-five men. The policeman assumed that detectives were bringing in the prisoners of a raid.

Instead of hurrying into the building, however, these men conferred on the sidewalk. They then separated in groups obviously according to plan. Some disappeared into the alley in back of the Detective Bureau. Others strolled in groups up and down the block; still others loitered near the front entrance of the building.

Then three men mounted the front steps of the Bureau, one of them slipping into his overcoat pocket a revolver which he had taken from inside his coat.

The police, quickly organizing, ran outside and captured three of the newcomers, for the others es-

caped. The prisoners were brought back to the Detective Bureau and were identified as Louis Campagnia, Frank Perry and Samuel Marcus, all members of Al Capone's bodyguard.

On Campagnia and Perry were found two automatic revolvers each. On Marcus the detectives found at first only one revolver. Later when it looked as if he would be detained by the police Marcus whipped out from inside his shirt a sawed-off automatic and attempted to shoot his way out of the Detective Bureau. The police on this occasion quite lost their temper with Mr. Marcus.

Not always, however, have the police of Chicago been rude to gentlemen of gang society. I quote again from a Chicago newspaper. The story concerns a member of the bodyguard of "Bugs" Moran, Al Capone's sole considerable rival in Chicago.

"This Moran gangster banks his loot at one of the city's leading savings institutions. The heads of the bank persuaded him to buy some bonds they had for sale. He bought \$15,000 worth. In a few weeks he needed the money. When they wouldn't give it to him immediately (there is usually some delay necessary in those matters), the gunman promised to return—'heeled.'

"The bank officials were in terror and the next day the bank was full of policemen. Sure enough the

gunman walked into the bank, up to the cashier's cage and thrust a pistol through the bars.

" 'Get my money on the line, bum, or I'll give you the works!' he shouted.

"Detectives came forward and remonstrated. They finally persuaded the gangster to cease his attempts to move big business along with the aid of a pistol."

Even Chicago's school children know that one of the city's leading industries is the sale of beer, notwithstanding the fact that the Constitution of the United States disapproves of it. A confession made by the office manager of a leading beer combine furnishes an illustration of what Chicago police have sometimes done about the above mentioned violation of our Constitution. The Gennas named in the confession were important in the industry until they were eliminated by the Moran interests on the one hand and by Al Capone on the other. Most of the Gennas died suddenly. The sworn confession says in part:

"On occasions when truckloads of alcohol would be going to different parts of the city, and they would be intercepted by strange policemen, complaint was lodged by the Gennas. It was arranged then between the Gennas and the police squads in the Central Detail as follows:

"When a long haul was to be made through strange territory the Gennas on the preceding night

would call certain telephone numbers and say 'Tomorrow at 7.' On the next morning at 7 a uniformed squad of police would remain in the offing until a truckload of alcohol would start from the Genna warehouse. This squad would convoy them through the zones of danger. This affiant himself has called the police and told them the number of men they were to send to convoy the alcohol for the Gennas."

Let us see whether the more highly placed guardians of the law, the magistrates and judges of Chicago, have been more harsh than the police toward denizens of Chicago's underworld. Once more I will quote, this time giving two cases reported by the Chicago Crime Commission:

"He (a notorious burglar) was paroled for the fifth time on July 23, 1928, and was still on parole when he committed the last burglary. In view of the above record (the record is quoted in full), it is difficult to conceive of a defendant more habitually inclined to commit crime, particularly burglary, than the defendant in this case.

"Yet this was considered by the judge a proper case in which to waive the count charging the defendant with being an habitual criminal."

Another case quoted from the same source:

"On Jan. 15, 1930, Attorney Frank A. McDonnell appeared in Judge William N. Gammill's courtroom and requested a continuance on behalf

of a defendant charged with murder. Attorney McDonnell stated that the defendant had recently contracted a cold and he asked Judge Gammill if he wanted a doctor's certificate. Judge Gammill answered no; and continued the case to Feb. 18, 1930. It is interesting to note that the case has been pending since Dec. 12, 1928, and has been continued sixteen times before six different judges."

Also let us remember that in the 500 murders committed in the underworld of Chicago in ten years, not a single one was punished—by the law.

Occasionally the exigencies of the law even in Chicago make it necessary to detain notorious gangsters in the safekeeping of local jails. Such inconveniences to Chicago's citizens of the underworld are mitigated by courtesies seldom equalled in prisons elsewhere. Take the instance of Frankie Lake and Terry Druggan, names familiar to students of Chicago gang history.

These two gentlemen were being held in the County Jail in Chicago pending their trials for violating the Constitution of the United States. They were such important individuals that one of the local newspapers sent a reporter to interview them.

The reporter went to the County Jail and asked Sheriff Peter Hoffman, in charge of the institution, to be allowed to talk to Frankie Lake. He was informed that Lake was "out."

The reporter asked, "On bail or writ or something?"

"No," he was told, "Frankie went to his dentist."

Chicago reporters are as a rule fairly shock-proof; but such considerateness on the part of the warden toward a notorious prisoner rather startled the reporter. Then he put it down to simple humaneness, this letting a prisoner have his teeth treated by a better dentist than the prison affords. The reporter thereupon asked to see the other prisoner, Terry Druggan.

He was told, "Oh, Terry's out, too."

By now the reporter was fairly staggered. "Why, what's ailing *him*?"

Sheriff Hoffman looked slightly embarrassed. "What's the matter with Terry? Why—why—there's nothing wrong with Terry. He—just went out for a walk. But—" he added cheerfully, "he's been out some time now and should be back any minute. Stick around, you won't have to wait long!"

As a matter of fact the reporter had to wait several hours before either Mr. Druggan or Mr. Lake returned.

The reporter's newspaper printed an account of this prison courtesy and the story created comment. Sheriff Hoffman and his two charges were incensed at the reporter's indiscretion.

Several days later the reporter called again at the jail to get an interview with Terry Druggan. This time instead of giving out an interview Mr. Druggan gave the reporter a pretty thorough beating up.

The instances I have given so far touch only the rank and file of Chicago gangs. Let us now cast a glance on high, at the two figures whom Chicago gangsters themselves obey. One hesitates to retell the familiar; and the two gang rulers of Chicago have become nationally known, though "Bugs" Moran has been eclipsed by the fame of Al Capone; but let us bring their story up-to-date.

"Bugs" Moran is a taciturn cold-blooded Irishman who rules the North Side of Chicago. He has not the Latin color of personality that makes Al Capone such good copy for the newspapers; but Moran, too, has his points. The chief of them is that he is the only gang leader of stature who has been able so far to withstand Al Capone.

On Al Capone a number of books and a whole library of periodical literature have been written. I shall confine myself to recording only the latest pages of the history he and Moran are making in their conduct of liquor and vice industries in Chicago and the surrounding country.

Although, as I have said, Moran's share of Chicago is the North Side and Al Capone's the rest of the city and adjoining territory, there is always



between those two rulers, as between many neighbor nations, a certain amount of friction over boundaries. There have been pacts of peace and allocation of territory between Moran and Capone; but when either of these two powers wants to break a treaty he goes about the business more directly than do the chancelleries of regular governments. Neither Moran nor Capone bothers to find first some high-sounding excuse for breaking a peace treaty. The "Big Shots" of Chicago simply send their fighting forces out to "do their stuff."

It is needless for me to point out that two of the most "wanted" individuals in Chicago are "Bugs" Moran and Al Capone; and here I don't mean wanted by the police. What has kept both Moran and Al Capone alive so far is their ability to outwit many attempts to assassinate them.

To understand the latest bulletins in the Moran-Capone war let us go back to as recent a date as February 14, 1929, St. Valentine's Day, which was to give its name to the historic event I am about to recall.

Moran's headquarters at the time was a single-story brick building at 2122 North Clark Street. It looked like a mere garage and over its main doors the lettering said, "S.M.C. Cartage Company."

North Clark Street is a banal but busy thoroughfare, full of the clangor of street cars, noisy with trucks and other traffic; its sidewalks are popu-

lous; and for neighbors Number 2122 had small stores and a number of houses devoted to transient roomers. These neighbors took at its face value the sign over Number 2122, as the home of some uninteresting trucking concern.

Across the street from the garage were two rooming houses whose front windows commanded an excellent view of Number 2122. The house at Number 2119 was kept by Mrs. Michael Doody, the other, at Number 2135, by Mary Atkinson. About a week before St. Valentine's Day two men unknown to Mrs. Doody rented one of her front rooms. Two other men unknown to Mary Atkinson rented a front room at the latter's house.

In each case the boarders kept to their rooms. Never did more than one at a time go out for any reason. Later it appeared that both pairs must have spent practically all the week, day and night, watching at the front windows of their respective rooms. The floor about those windows was littered with cigarette butts.

It was known that for some weeks prior to St. Valentine's Day "Bugs" Moran had been buying bargains, trucks of liquor which had been held up at the point of guns and taken away from their, so to speak, legal owners. It appears now that these bargains were not thrown in Moran's way in good faith but were probably part of an elaborate plot to "get" him.

It has been established that on February 13, a telephone message told "Bugs" Moran that another bargain truck of hijacked liquor would be delivered at Number 2122 North Clark Street at eleven o'clock sharp on the morning of St. Valentine's Day.

Half an hour before the time at which the truck was to arrive Moran was on his way to the garage.

Already in the garage were five of his lieutenants and a sixth man, R. H. Schwimmer, an optometrist, whose only reason for being there at the time was his social ambition; he aspired to be known as an intimate of underworld aristocracy.

The five lieutenants of Moran who were in the garage at half past ten on St. Valentine's morning were typical of the personnel that man the organization of a Chicago underworld baron. They were:

James Clark, brother-in-law of "Bugs" Moran, suspected many times of bank robberies and murder;

Frank Gusenberg and his brother, Pete, notorious in Chicago gang history as safe-blowers and killers;

John May, former safe-blower and later machine gunner for Moran;

Adam Heyer, who in his time had to use a variety of aliases and was now business agent for "Bugs" Moran.

At ten o'clock down North Clark Street strolled Alfred Weinshank, speakeasy proprietor and closely associated with Moran. He was built much on the lines of "Bugs" Moran and on that day wore a light tan overcoat and an olive-brown felt hat. At that period "Bugs" Moran also sported a light tan overcoat and an olive-brown felt hat.

Alfred Weinshank turned into Number 2122 and was hailed by the six men in the room of the garage. All the seven wore the well-tailored, expensive garb of their social kind; and all were smoking costly cigars. Although they sat around at the time apparently in holiday humor, they were waiting for their chief to come and give the word for an important expedition to set out. Outside the office where they sat were seven great closed trucks and two high-powered automobiles. This whole fleet was to set out for Detroit any hour now, on one of the biggest rum-running trips of the season.

Reconstructing what happened on that St. Valentine's Day it seems that when Alfred Weinshank entered the garage, resembling as he did "Bugs" Moran in build and garb, the two pairs of watchers in the front windows of Numbers 2119 and 2135 must have left their rooms at once.

At ten-thirty sharp there drove up to the front door of the "S.M.C. Cartage Company" a black, open touring car. On the outside by the running board was a black-painted gong such as is used on

police squad automobiles. In the car were two men in police uniform, three in plain clothes.

What followed can only be synthesized from many circumstantial details; for to date not a single actual witness has been induced to tell what happened. There are nevertheless so many clues, that we may picture not only the occurrence but even an approximation of what went on in the minds of the men in the garage and those who came there in the black car.

The six Moran men and Schwimmer, their admirer, were in the midst of chat when into the big cement-floored office stalked two men in police uniform, one in plain clothes. The leader wore the uniform of a police lieutenant.

He ordered the men in the office to get up, hold their hands high and face the wall while his two companions "frisked" them for their revolvers.

Earlier in this story I pointed out how the Gennas, when their rum-running trucks were hindered by the police, had only to complain and such interference ceased. Sometimes such activity on the part of the Chicago police was pure blundering, accidental interruption of agreements between chieftains of the underworld and police officials. At other times when the police actually arrested members of a bootleg syndicate, an expensively maintained, highly competent legal staff soon set the "pinched" ones free.

It is understandable therefore that Moran's gang in the garage felt no uneasiness when men in police uniform deprived them of their revolvers. Not one of the seven even took his cigar out of his mouth. At worst the raid meant only a trip to the nearest police station where writs, prepared by Moran's lawyers, would at once permit them to return to the garage; even their weapons would be restored to them.

Their placid expectation was not fulfilled.

Two of the men in civilian clothes of the five who came in the "police squad" car had remained in the corridor. The moment the searchers had taken from the Moran men their revolvers, and while the seven men were still facing the wall, these other men stepped into the room.

One of the newcomers carried a sawed-off shotgun, the other a Thompson sub-machine gun. This latter weapon, which so often figures in modern gang warfare, is thus described in the catalogue of Peter von Frantzius, the Chicago dealer who sold it in considerable numbers:

"The Thompson gun is an automatic carbine, a new type of firearm combining the portability of a rifle with the effectiveness of a machine gun. It is a .45-calibre gun, weighs nine pounds, eleven ounces and is thirty-three inches long. It is equipped with fine sights, a wind gauge and has a magazine capacity of 100 shots. A compensator, attached to

the muzzle, reduces recoil to practically nothing and controls any tendency of the gun to shoot high. One hundred slugs can be aimed and fired in exactly one minute."

It was this gun that now mowed down the seven men facing the wall. They fell to the floor almost as one man.

When the drum on the Thompson gun was emptied, the other man with the sawed-off shotgun stepped up to the prostrate men to see if the job needed finishing up.

Apparently this man still saw signs of life in Clark and May for he filled them with buckshot.

Then the two gunners bequeathed their weapons to the Moran garage; and the five visitors leisurely walked out of the building, climbed into their car without hurry and drove off.

They had reason to think that their job left nothing undone. They were partly mistaken.

When some minutes later passersby and the police came into the garage and saw the shambles, they found one man still alive, Frank Gusenberg.

He was rushed to the Alexian Brothers' Hospital where it was seen at once that he was dying.

A police sergeant, who had long known Gusenberg, was hurried to the hospital in the hope that the dying gangster might tell him who the killers were.

"Which gang was it, Frank?" the sergeant

pleaded. "You're dying. Your brother Pete is dead. The others are dead. They never gave you boys a chance but shot you in the back! Come on, Frank, help us get them!"

I have myself watched, as reporter, exactly such a scene in another city. An old police friend of a dying gunman pleading with him to tell who had shot him; the doctor assuring the gunman that death was really imminent; a Catholic priest, with whom the gunman had once been a fellow altar boy, exhorting the dying man, warning him that his refusal to help the law would bring him punishment in the hereafter; all this pressure joining in vain against the stamina of a man of subnormal intelligence whose life blood was ebbing.

Frank Gusenberg, too, was true to the code of his kind. He heard the plea of his friend. He, too, must have felt the wish to revenge himself, his brother and his pals. And still the gunman shook his head and died without a word when he might have spoken.

Which made the St. Valentine's Day Massacre, as the event has been named, a job one hundred per cent efficient.

Though Chicago is habituated to a daily fare of a murder this triumph of gangland execution created an uproar. Already several months prior to the Massacre the citizens of Chicago indulged in one of their periodical uprisings against the rule of



crime and graft which seems to be the city's chronic plague. An election threw out of office several heads of the municipal and county governments. As usual the revolt concentrated on the police department; there followed the usual "shake-up." A new chief of police, William Russell, was placed in power.

The good citizens of Chicago entertained high hopes of Russell. He had worked his way to the top from a policeman's beat. Dr. Phillip Yarrow, head of the Illinois Vigilance Association, an authority on Chicago police, crime and graft and usually a bitter critic, said of Police Commissioner Russell a year after his appointment,

"He has done a masterful job already. You can say to the world that Chicago is being cleaned up with astounding and rapid efficiency. With the present model policies and supervisions in the Chicago Police Department this city will be the cleanest and safest in the world."

Judge Frank Comerford, distinguished in Chicago for his resistance to gang pressure when criminals were on trial before him, agreed with Dr. Yarrow. "Commissioner Russell is an honest and capable man. He has the confidence and respect of the people. Give him unlimited power over the department."

When the St. Valentine's Day Massacre again aroused Chicago, everybody looked to Commissioner Russell for action. Sure enough, within a month of

the crime, he and Chief of the Detective Bureau, John Stege, named seven men as the agents and actual executioners of the Massacre.

Al Capone, of course, would have been the first to be so named were it not for a remarkable coincidence, or whatever you wish to call it, which afforded him an elaborate and impressive alibi. At the very hour of the Massacre Mr. Capone was in Florida, talking to the District Attorney of Miami. It turned out later that the District Attorney of Miami had not summoned him; that Capone called at the latter's office of his own accord; that he had not even anything of importance to say to him. It was just a social visit, that's all. So how could anyone reasonably accuse Mr. Capone of having anything to do with the St. Valentine's Day Massacre in far away Chicago?

The seven men named by Police Commissioner Russell as directly connected with the crime were:

Fred Burke, an elusive gentleman, already wanted for several major bank robberies and killings, including the murder of a policeman;

James Ray, a colleague of Fred Burke in many of his operations, particularly in a \$350,000 bond robbery at Jefferson, Wisconsin;

Joseph Lolordo, who had learned to use a machine gun in the Great War and applied his learning in the service of Al Capone;

John Scalesi, famous for his ability with the

Thompson sub-machine gun and a shining figure in Chicago crime history;

Albert Anselmi, another Chicago underworld notable; he and Scalesi were known, even before the Massacre, as the "Execution Squad";

Jack Guzik, business head of Capone's office. He was living at the Congress Hotel and the records of his telephone calls were subpoenaed. It was shown that for several days before the Massacre Guzik had frequent long distance talks with Capone in Florida; the day before the Massacre these conversations ceased; then a day or two after the event they were resumed;

And Jack McGurn, a medal man in gangland shooting circles. Assistant State's Attorney Stansbury definitely established that McGurn paid \$10,000 apiece to each of the killers in the Massacre.

Seven men named by the authorities with considerable material to back up the accusations, was a promising beginning. Unfortunately Messrs. Fred Burke, James Ray and Joseph Lolordo refused to let their whereabouts be known to the police. Which left four to be prosecuted.

Then Scalesi, Anselmi and a third, Joseph Guinta, as well known as the other two for gangland executions, were given a dinner by fellow gunmen. At the height of the feast it was suddenly revealed that the affair had been planned as a farewell to the three guests of honor. Police found Scalesi,

Anselmi and Guinta dead, still at the head of the banquet table, wine glasses in hand, sprawled over the food. They had risen to drink a toast. At that moment they were clubbed and shot to death by their hosts.

That left only two to bring to trial for the St. Valentine's Day Massacre.

After thinking things over those in charge of the prosecution decided that Jack Guzik's telephone conversations with Capone, since the subject matter was unknown, did not in themselves constitute a crime. The charges against him were therefore dropped.

There was left then only Jack McGurn, the paymaster, to face the trial.

So aroused was Chicago by the Massacre that McGurn was called for trial on May 28, only a little more than three months after the crime. But on the day of the trial the prosecution declared the State was not ready with its case against McGurn and asked a continuance to August 15.

On August 15, McGurn again appeared for trial. Again the State declared it was not ready and asked to have the case continued to September 23.

On September 23, on the part of the prosecution, Assistant State's Attorney Ditchburne addressed the court,

"The State," he announced, "must ask for another continuance. We are still investigating."

The trial was adjourned to October 28.

On October 28 it was adjourned to December 2.

On December 2 the State asked a fourth continuation.

According to Illinois law if a defendant has asked four times within the year to be placed on trial and the State does not proceed, he goes free. McGurn's lawyers now made a formal demand under this provision for an immediate trial; or if the State was not prepared, for a dismissal of the case.

Whereupon Jack McGurn went free.

And—so far as anything that the law has done about the St. Valentine's Day Massacre—that was that.

But "Bugs" Moran did not feel that justice had been done in the matter. The Massacre so genuinely shocked him that when he heard of it he blurted out, contrary to gangdom code,

"Only Capone kills like that!"

For over a year nothing notable came of his emotion. Chicago, it was true, continued to contribute its more than a murder a day; but not all of them could be laid to the Moran crowd. The Massacre remained not only unpunished by the law but also unmatched as yet by anything that came from the Moran camp.

Moran, however, has the patience of a bloodhound.

It was discovered later that for months he had

tapped Capone telephone wires and that he kept track thereby of the movements of Capone and his gang.

Still Moran did little about what he knew; either because he was biding his time; or because even with his listening in he was not able to learn Capone's vital secrets.

Then on May 30, 1930, a number of Capone's gunmen got up a small party for an evening's good time. Host to the party was George Druggan, whose brother Terry you may remember as being out for a walk when a reporter called at Sheriff Hoffman's jail to interview the prisoner.

Others at this party were Joe Bertche, recently of Ohio State Prison, now a Capone gangster; Sam Pellar, a specialist in election day terrorism; Michael Quirk, a crack shot with the sawed-off rifle; "Red" McLaughlin, an underworld Beau Brummell, kidnapper and notable as a killer. The men had brought four women with them and expected a fifth to join them at Manning's Hotel at Fox Lake outside of Chicago, where the party was to take place.

The hotel had been chosen with some discretion; it was far enough from the Moran stronghold to enable the gentlemen of the party to relax their customary vigilance.

Toward midnight the party was mounting to heights of hilarity. The automatic piano in the dining room dinned away without rest. There had been

much food consumed and still more liquor. Members of the party sang and danced solo, in couples, and all together. There was friendly scuffling and ardent love-making with little squeamishness about privacy.

The room where all this was going on was on the ground floor. So great was the din, and so engrossed in itself was the party that no one noticed a window screen was being removed from the outside.

Then one of the men in the room happened to look in that direction. In the place of the window screen he saw the muzzle of a machine gun. He yelled but his voice was drowned out by the drumming roar of a "Tommy."

Joe Bertche, Michael Quirk and Sam Pellar fell to the floor dead, "chopped," in the expressive slang of gangster gunnery.

George Druggan and one of the women fell wounded.

"Red" McLaughlin's left leg was riddled; but catching hold of two of the unhurt but frenzied women and using them as shields he managed to escape from the room.

The machine-gun squad, having emptied their "Tommy," vanished.

The exploit was a respectable approach to that of St. Valentine's Day, even though the dead numbered only three and the remaining two men were only wounded.

Chicago gunmen draw the line at killing

women; not because gangsters are gallant; but because they dare not kill a woman. As someone has said, "Chicago juries may be dumb, and some may be crooked, but believe me, *they are sentimental!*"

This accounts for the fact that while out of the five men at the Fox Lake party, three were killed and two were wounded; of the five women present only two were wounded. It accounts also for McLaughlin's escape from the room.

However, five days later his body was found in the Sanitary Canal, still in fancy tailoring, with \$800 in his pockets, a nickel tied up in his fist and five lead slugs in his brain.

The one consolation Chicago had derived during years of such murders was that the death list consisted largely of gangsters. This was the only consideration that at all justified police inactivity in bringing the murderers to trial, which would cost the State money. There is an unofficial but more or less understandable attitude on the part of the police toward gang murders, a feeling of "let dog eat dog," with apologies to the quadrupeds.

But on April 27, 1926, a public prosecuting officer, Assistant State's Attorney William H. McSwiggin, and two men took a taxi in the Loop and went to Cicero, the neighbor municipality of Chicago, which was Al Capone's bailiwick even more than the Loop itself. The three men got out of their



taxi and were about to enter a saloon when a closed sedan passed them.

From this car there suddenly spurted machine-gun fire; and when it was over McSwiggin and his two companions were corpses on the sidewalk.

The killing by gangsters of a public official aroused a furore in Chicago and its citizens were about to launch another of their infrequent revolts against gang rule. Then as details of the killing began to come out, the public's clean-cut indignation against the gangsters became confused. It turned out that McSwiggin's two companions were also gangsters; and that it was not public business which had brought the three together. Whereupon many Chicagoans, who had been frightened by what seemed an irruption of underworld terrorism into the upper world, now tried to calm their fears by classing the McSwiggin murder as perhaps only a family row after all.

The reporter on a metropolitan newspaper can hardly be judged by the company he keeps; that would make him a protean character; for his work of course brings him in contact with the lowest as well as the highest. Nobody, for instance, thinks less of a police reporter just because he is intimately acquainted with gangsters and is friendly with some. It is his business to know them, his work profits by it and thereby presumably also the public for whom he writes. For a related reason newspapermen have

been considered as privileged neutrals and noncombatants in Chicago as in wars between nations. Police reporters are generally "good mixers" and gangsters sometimes cultivate them, partly because a criminal often fears the press more than he does the police; he hates the glare of publicity that the press focuses on him and its million-fold reproductions of his photograph.

For sixteen years Alfred "Jake" Lingle was police reporter for the *Chicago Tribune* and although in all his career he wrote scarcely a line, no man in Chicago was better placed for his job. He was born in Chicago; developed, so to speak, in its streets; was always "crazy about cops" and fires; knew thousands of police as well as those they hunted. He was a good-looking, easy-going man with a characteristic smile on his lips of good-humored slyness.

His paper allowed him the fullest freedom of movement. Daily in his working hours he went to the races, to prize-fights, wrestling matches; yet he went there not as sports writer. The elite as well as the rank and file of the crime world were to be found at these places; a reporter could pick up material for his paper there and make valuable acquaintances. And Lingle was a good reporter in that respect. A tangible symbol of this was his diamond studded belt buckle given by Al Capone "To my Friend, Jake Lingle."

After sixteen years on the *Chicago Tribune* as reporter his salary was \$65 a week. He did not complain. It was a good salary for a "leg man," whose work was to drift around and let others on the staff write the stories he telephoned in. Another reason he did not complain of his salary was that he was obviously a rich man. He came to work in a luxurious automobile driven by a liveried chauffeur. His betting on the races was never less than in units of hundreds of dollars, more often in' thousands. He had an \$18,000 home for his family in a wealthy country resort and himself lived in one of the best Chicago hotels. His stock market speculations mounted into hundreds of thousands of dollars.

In 1921 when his wealth became conspicuous he told his fellow newspapermen that by the death of his father he inherited considerable Chicago real estate. Later two uncles died and their wills, too, were supposed to have added substantially to Lingle's wealth.

Meanwhile he had worked himself into a strategic position on the side of the police. For many years he was friendly with a patrolman who rose in the ranks. Throughout the rise of William Russell the reporter kept up a close friendship with him. "Jake," said Russell, speaking of Lingle, "was always like a son to me."

When in 1928 Chicago was raging against gangdom it was the *Chicago Tribune* that led the

## CHICAGO CONTRIBUTES

public clamor. As I have said, the usual police shake-up followed, and the demand was for a new commissioner. The *Chicago Tribune*, as the most powerful agency of the revolt, was in a position to enlist public approval of any man the paper nominated as the new police head. It has been said that Lingle's recommendation had much to do with the appointment of William Russell to that post.

Lingle was now more valuable to his newspaper than ever. On the one hand he was the acknowledged friend of Chicago's overlord of crime, Al Capone, recipient of gifts from him, guest at his various homes, privileged to interviews to an extent denied to other reporters. On the other hand he was the closest personal friend of the chief of police who bore the endorsement, as we have seen, of Chicago's most militant reformers.

In view of these relations an incident that occurred on the eighth of June, 1930, was therefore all the more remarkable. Lingle in company with a high Chicago police official was strolling along one of the busiest streets in the Loop at high noon. Suddenly his companion saw a startled light come into the reporter's usually cool blue eyes. A sedan slowly passed them, in it two men. Lingle stopped abruptly, exclaiming under his voice,

"I am being tailed!"

There was fear in his tone and he hurried into the nearest store.

What had a police reporter like Lingle to fear?

The next day, June 9, 1930, answered that question. Lingle must have recovered from his uneasiness of the day before, for shortly after one in the afternoon, dressed for the races, he set out from his hotel alone and on foot. He was about to enter the central subway of the Illinois Central, when from a coupe standing by the subway entrance two men hailed him.

"Hey, Jake," one exclaimed, "play Hy Schneider in the third!"

The man must have been well informed on Lingle's movements and knew that the reporter was bound for the races. Lingle grinned and called back, "I've got him!"

Two other men saw Lingle acknowledge the greeting. Whereupon they followed the reporter down the subway steps. One of them was a tall hatless man with light colored hair. He wore gray silk gloves.

The three men passed a newsstand at the foot of the steps in the tunnel. The blond man stopped to buy a newspaper. Lingle was himself reading *Racing Form* as he walked, a cigar, as usual, jauntily between his lips.

The blond-headed man came hurrying back to Lingle with the newspaper he had bought. With his left hand—unmistakably he was left-handed—he took a revolver out of his pocket. Instead of step-

ping to Lingle's side he came close behind him, pressed the revolver against the nape of Lingle's neck, pointing the barrel upward. When he fired the shot the bullet passed through Lingle's brain and came out of his forehead. It was a coolly executed job.

Lingle dropped dead.

The blond man threw the revolver down and hastened—he did not run—out of the tunnel.

The other man who had come down with Lingle also left the tunnel by another stairway.

Ten people saw the shooting, scores of others heard it and panic broke out.

Only one man had the presence of mind—in Chicago it is called something not quite so complimentary—to pursue the killer. He ran up the subway steps after him, saw him on the other side of the street, loping easily along. The witness gasped out to a traffic policeman,

“Stop him!”

Not knowing that there had been a murder the policeman did not draw his revolver but set out on a run for the fugitive. He lost him in an alley nearby. He did get a silk left-handed glove the blond man threw away.

I well remember the rage I felt when I read the first newspaper bulletins of the murder of Lingle. I never worked on a Chicago newspaper and Lingle's name was unknown to me. I had read unmoved

of the killing of hundreds of gangsters. But this was something so different that for the first time I knew vividly what are the feelings of a man avid to get up a lynching party.

It is in the light of some such emotion that we must read the *Chicago Tribune's* first comment on the Lingle murder:

"The meaning of this murder is plain. What has made Lingle valuable to his newspaper marked him as dangerous to his killers. The *Tribune* accepts this challenge. It is war. There will be casualties but that is to be expected, it being war."

The *Chicago Tribune's* first step was to offer a reward of \$25,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the murderer.

The *Tribune's* newspaper rivals at once also offered rewards, the *Herald and Examiner*, \$25,000, the *Chicago Evening Post*, \$5,000. The Press Club of Chicago called a hasty meeting to vote another reward of \$10,000. Within a few hours of the revolver shot \$65,000 were available to tempt underworld informers who knew anything about Lingle's death.

Within twenty-four hours, too, every newspaper publisher in Chicago subscribed to a joint declaration:

"The undersigned Chicago daily newspapers interpret the murder of Alfred J. Lingle as an espe-

cially significant challenge to millions of decent citizens . . . and pledge our organizations and our resources to the cleaning out of gang, police, official and any other public viciousness.

“Chicago *Daily Illustrated Times*,

“Chicago *Daily News*,

“Chicago *Evening American*,

“Chicago *Evening Post*,

“Chicago *Herald and Examiner*,

“Chicago *Journal of Commerce*,

“Chicago *Tribune*.”

It looked like an impressively united front.

The funeral cortege that followed Lingle's body next day from the Church of Our Lady of Sorrows was two miles in length. The pallbearers were fellow newspapermen and high police and political personalities.

Then followed a military detachment, chapters of the American Legion, one hundred mounted policemen, the police department band, a detachment of blue jackets, a company of firemen, and thousands of automobiles. Financiers, public officials, representatives of the civic welfare organizations, clergy, publishers, notables of every kind came to pay homage to the journalist who had fallen in the city's war against crime and corruption.

For something like twenty-four hours Chicago thus mourned Lingle as a martyr and his murder



affected good citizens everywhere like a bugle call to arms in a righteous cause. Then a strange discordant note crept into the mourning. Questions were being asked about Lingle that tended to blur the public's picture of him as a hero. Answers to these questions were casting shadows on his past.

First came the discovery that Lingle's father and his two uncles did not, as he had reported, leave him inheritances that would explain his wealth; they left him little more than enough to pay for their modest funerals.

Yet an examination of Lingle's bank accounts, taking at random the month of October, 1928, showed the following deposits in cash:

October 1, \$500; October 2, \$1000; October 4, \$700; October 8, \$500; October 9, \$900; October 15, \$450; October 18, \$300; October 26, \$2000; November 1, \$2000.

Also it was found that Lingle spent on an average \$60,000 a year.

Obviously his weekly salary of \$65 accounts for little of all this.

Further investigation into his affairs began to involve Police Commissioner Russell. It was found that Lingle and Russell had a joint speculative account with a stock brokerage house. At one time the books showed more than \$150,000 to their credit. Yet for some reason the account was entered neither in Lingle's nor in Russell's name.

These and other discoveries created a painful state of public mind. It became no longer possible to doubt that Lingle's wealth had come from the underworld. He was "in the take."

Several theories emerged from the welter of investigations of the killing of Lingle. The most obvious explanation was based on the fact that Lingle on the one hand was "like a son" to Police Commissioner Russell; and on the other hand he was a "dear friend" of Al Capone. During Lingle's last few years Al Capone's industries in Chicago flourished. Whereas "Bugs" Moran suffered much grief at the hands of the police; much more than Al Capone, who suffered not at all.

True, "Bugs" Moran also flourished in his bailiwick on the North Side. But many of his enterprises were harassed, raided, smashed; all this at the hands of the police; *and in Chicago!*

The theory I speak of may throw light on what happened immediately after the shooting of Lingle and on events ever since. For instance, half an hour after Lingle was killed and while his body was still lying in the subway, Commissioner Russell and Chief of Detectives Stege were on the scene. White with emotion they held a brief consultation.

"What about grabbing them now?" asked Stege.

"No," replied Russell. "Wait. Give them half an hour to get back there. Then smash in!"

Half an hour later police broke into the headquarters of the "Bugs" Moran-Aiello gang. In material they seized revolvers, sawed-off shotguns and machine guns. The only prisoner they got was Dominic Aiello, not an important capture. Somebody had "tipped off" the "Big Shots."

At the same time everywhere through Chicago streets there resounded the sinister yet familiar crescendo wail of police sirens, heralding the hurrying of police rifle squads in the biggest round-up of suspects and criminals ever staged in that spectacular metropolis. Six hundred "suspects" were brought in. Chief Russell was showing the world how sincere he was in the hunt for Lingle's murderers.

But the gesture, sincere as it may have been, did not save Commissioner Russell from the embarrassments that were developing as Lingle's real rôle in life became clear. Two days after Lingle's murder public clamor drove from office the police commissioner whose appointment less than three years before had been acclaimed even by Chicago's most militant reformers. With Russell resigned his Chief of Detectives Stege.

John H. Alcock, also a policeman who had risen from the ranks, was made Commissioner of Police of Chicago.

The six hundred "suspects" brought in by the police rifle squads proved a poor catch of fish after

all. By dozens and scores the police had to release them for lack of evidence against them.

A more promising trail began at the revolver which Lingle's killer had thrown away immediately after firing the shot. It was a snub-nosed .38 Colt, the kind gangsters call a "belly gun," because it fits so snugly into the specially tailored vest pocket of a well-dressed gunman.

The number on the revolver had been filed off; but by a special process employed in the laboratory of a ballistic expert the number was recovered.

That led the trail to Peter von Frantzius, sporting goods dealer at 608 Diversey Parkway, as the man who had sold the revolver. He has been mentioned before in this account. Frantzius has sold so much armanent to gangsters that he has been called "armorer to the underworld."

On his records it was found that the revolver used in killing Lingle was one of six bought of him by Frank Foster, a well-known figure in Chicago killings, at different times in the employ of Al Capone and recently a stalwart in the camp of "Bugs" Moran.

By the time the investigation got around to Foster's name he quit Chicago and left no forwarding address.

The police then requested the presence of Mr. Jack Zuta, the brains of the Moran-Aiello organization. He was escorted to the Detective Bureau which

figured in the siege by gangsters described earlier in this story. The police had no evidence against Mr. Zuta but they went through the motions of trying to get information from him that would help them get Lingle's murderer.

In the rooms of the Detective Bureau Zuta decidedly showed fear. But it was not the police he feared. Their questioning got nothing from him or "on" him. Nevertheless Zuta was obviously in terror. When the questioning was over and the police told him he was free to go, his teeth chattered as he pleaded with Police Lieutenant Barker,

"Don't let me go alone, lieutenant! I was in a place of safety when you arrested me. You owe it to me to get me back there safely. Take me there in your car!"

"Why, what are you afraid of?" Lieutenant Barker asked; though the officer had a fair idea what it was all about.

"This is the Loop," Zuta pleaded. "Al Capone's territory. If I leave this building without police protection, I'm a dead man! I've got a woman with me. If you don't care about me at least you owe her safe escort!"

Barker had served with the United States Marines in the War and was one of only eight survivors of his company that began with 250 men when they entered the fighting at Chateau Thierry and ended at the Battle of St. Mihiel. Little as

Barker admired Jack Zuta he knew the man was talking sense when he said he was in danger in passing through Al Capone's territory, especially now that Capone's friend Lingle had been murdered.

Barker said to Zuta and his woman friend,  
"Come along, I'll take you in my car."

Zuta had brought along for protection not only the woman but two male friends. The four now followed Lieutenant Barker down the rear stairway of the Detective Bureau, where the lieutenant's car was waiting for them. It was a closed Pontiac.

Lieutenant Barker took the wheel. One of Zuta's male friends sat by his side. Zuta crouched in the back seat between his woman and his other male friend. He was peering out of the rear of the automobile.

Barker was driving slowly along State Street in the full glare of night illumination on one of the busiest thoroughfares in the world at a time when the street was full of the crowds that had just left the theatres.

Suddenly Zuta cried out,  
"My God! They're after us!"

A blue sedan had stolen up to the Pontiac. Two men were passengers, a third was driving. The moment the sedan came abreast of the Pontiac the three men in the other car threw open a door and began blazing away with revolvers at Barker's passengers.

Barker jerked home the emergency brake and

lighting out of his machine yanked out his revolver and emptied it at the attacking party.

The blue sedan now shot ahead and Lieutenant Barker jumped back into his car and started in pursuit.

Suddenly from the sedan's exhaust there belched thick black smoke which developed into a dense pall. It is a device rumrunners have learned from the war, this use of a smoke screen.

At the same time Lieutenant Barker's car came to a stop. A bullet had pierced its vitals.

He looked back at his passengers. They had vanished.

He went back on foot to the scene of the shooting.

The gangsters' bullets had not reached the targets they intended; but a motorman was killed, Elbert Lusader, father of three children; and another man was wounded, a night watchman. It was the oft-repeated story of the dangers of being "innocent bystanders."

The police now wanted Jack Zuta back. He must have had a shrewd idea as to who wanted so badly to kill him. It now looked as if the desire to kill Zuta had much to do with a desire to avenge the death of Lingle; and Zuta might now be willing to talk.

But like Frank Foster so now Jack Zuta quit

Chicago; and hard as the police tried to find him, they failed.

Mr. Zuta's wealth of wits was demonstrated, at least negatively, as the months went by. Here was a man for whom both the underworld and the police were eagerly hunting. Both organizations have no mean resources for such hunting; yet Zuta outwitted both packs until the search for him seemed to have died down.

He even must have lost his chattering fear of the gangster's gun-toting Nemesis. For we next hear of him gaily enjoying his summer vacation at Upper Nemahbun, a pleasure resort in Wisconsin. Of course he was not handing out visiting cards with his correct name; but he was well known at the resort as a good spender and a lover of dancing.

On August 1, almost two months after Lingle was shot, Zuta was the life of a party at a dance hall at Upper Nemahbun, vigilantly feeding nickels into the mechanical piano to keep the music going without let-up.

He had just started the piano going again when he heard all chatter behind him suddenly stop. There was something so paralyzing about the instant silence that Zuta dared not even turn to see what was happening; he stood as if really paralyzed.

Five men had marched into the dance hall, almost in military formation. One carried a machine gun; the others revolvers and snub-barrelled shot-



guns. The dancers saw them converge on the man who was setting the pace for the gay time that had been in swing.

The bearer of the machine gun deliberately placed his mechanism so that it would function without undue waste of life.

Jack Zuta got the brunt of the firing; the piano got the rest.

The execution party then left as unmolested as they had come.

Zuta in life, although respected for his business brains, was despised by gangdom as one likely to squeal under police pressure. Gang gunners thought, when they caught up with him, that they had silenced him forever. They did not count on what the police would find in his pockets. Or perhaps they did not care.

A note-book was found on him. This led to a treasure trove of information subsequently uncovered in letter files and in safe deposit vaults. Only a small part of the data thus uncovered has been made public so far; but even that was enough to embarrass many individuals, most of them paid by the citizens of Chicago and of Cook County to serve the interest of the public.

For instance, among the letters found was one from Chief of Police William O. Freeman of Evanston, one of Chicago's wealthiest suburbs. It was addressed to Jack Zuta.

"Dear Jack," it read. "I am temporarily in need of four 'C's' for a couple of months. Can you let me have it? The bearer does not know what it is, so put it in an envelope and seal it and address it to me.

"Your old pal,

"BILL FREEMAN.

"P.S. I will let you know the night of the party so be sure to come."

Another exhibit found was a card reading:

COUNTY OF COOK  
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

To the bearer, J. Zuta, is extended  
the courtesies of all departments.

1927. CHARLES E. GRAYSON, Sheriff.

Still another document was Membership Card Number 772 of the William Hale Thompson Republican Club. According to its wording Mr. Zuta supported the mayor of Chicago in his passionate campaigns for civic betterment.

A series of checks and notes showed that \$5000 went from Zuta to Joseph W. Schulman, for ten years and more a judge of the municipal court in Chicago.

A check for \$250 by Jack Zuta was made payable to Emanuel Eller and collected. Eller was

elected to the municipal bench in Chicago in 1922.

Two checks, amounting to \$600, were endorsed and collected by Louis I. Fisher, an attorney. Fisher's brother, Judge Fisher of Chicago, had issued injunctions restraining the police of Chicago from interfering with the operation of dog race-tracks in the city, enterprises which the Supreme Court later ruled as illegal.

At a time when George Van Lent was state senator of Illinois and a power in West Side politics he received and endorsed two checks for \$600 from Jack Zuta.

These are only a few of the finds in Jack Zuta's safe-deposit boxes so far made public.

The Chicago *Tribune* became lyrical about the hopes held out by this find. It said, "The business records of Jack Zuta, the murdered racketeer, have been located.... They promise to throw light on the Lingle murder and to bring about exposure and prosecution of gangsters and their allies who have hitherto enjoyed immunity.... Chicago is on the way to becoming the first great city in America to rid herself of gangster influence and gangster assassination...."

The carrying out of this exciting promise was largely the duty of State's Attorney Swansen. He promised that "when something tangible developed" from the papers found in Jack Zuta's records he would "place it before the Grand Jury."

The Chicago August Grand Jury was in session weeks after the Zuta find and three months after the Lingle murder. Although more than fifty municipal office-holders were shown by Zuta documents to have had dealings with him, not a word of Zuta or of Lingle was officially presented to the Jury by the prosecuting officer.

A reporter suggested to State's Attorney Swansen that the delay in presenting the discovered evidence would be interpreted by the public as an effort to cover up the whole business.

"The public will have to take it that way then," Swansen said; and went away on a vacation.

Meanwhile what began at Lingle's murder as a formidable united war front on the part of the newspapers of Chicago showed lamentable signs of degenerating into a free-for-all fight. A reporter from St. Louis wrote a series of articles accusing other reporters in Chicago, besides Lingle, of taking money for services to the underworld. The accusations were reprinted in the *Chicago Tribune*. At once the other newspapers issued protests, charges, counter-charges, challenges and what not.

The hunt for Lingle's slayer focused, as I have said, on a search for Frank Foster, the man who had bought of von Frantzius the revolver used in killing Lingle. By the original compact of the publishers of Chicago dailies, all news that would help Lingle's murderers and their accomplices to escape

was to be kept out of their papers until those sought by the police were safe in custody.

Yet the story that Frank Foster was being hunted was printed by all Chicago newspapers except the *Tribune*; even the fact that Foster was in Los Angeles. How he escaped reading this in Los Angeles newspapers is a mystery; or if he did read it he did not seem to take the news seriously.

Three days later, however, when he was arrested by the Los Angeles police and extradited by Illinois he showed himself concerned indeed. He pleaded as Jack Zuta did that Chicago police protect him on the way to that city and especially within its limits. The police with good reason took extraordinary precautions to keep Mr. Foster alive until the law should be through with him.

At the time of this writing Foster is experiencing the familiar vicissitudes in the law's delay that other gunmen on trial have endured in Chicago with stoic calm.

Lingle's murderer has not yet been brought to justice and the *Tribune's* high hope for a cleansing of Chicago of gangster and corrupt political rule is still to be fulfilled.

Meanwhile a glance at Chicago's mayor, William Hale Thompson, who has been in office much longer than the period covered by this story, reveals a striking figure.

Formerly a huge football fullback he is now

bloated in body and has been nicknamed, "Blowsy Bill." A graduate of Harvard, he "speaks the language" and thinks the thoughts of illiterate masses. A specimen of his campaign oratory:

"I'm not descending to personalities," he said of a political opponent at a big meeting, "but you should watch Doc Robertson eating in a restaurant—eggs in his whiskers, soup on his vest; you'd think the Doc got his education in a garbage wagon."

Regularly during his election campaigns he promised to rid Chicago of its gangsters. Somehow the gangsters have managed to survive his threats. They have even shown a seemingly Christian forgiveness for his campaign slaps at them. As we have seen, Mr. Jack Zuta on behalf of "Bugs" Moran was a member of the William Hale Thompson Republican organization. On occasion Mr. Zuta royally played host to the mayor.

Al Capone's forgiveness of Mayor Thompson went even further. He is known to have contributed heavy thousands of dollars to the Mayor's campaign funds; and the portrait of Mayor Thompson graces the desk of Al Capone at the latter's Chicago headquarters.

Mayor Thompson has launched many a far-flung crusade and always passionately. The influence of King George of England on the minds of Chicago's school children seemed to the mayor so sinister a thing that he raged, "If King George

comes to Chicago I'll bust him on the snout!" To counteract this foreign influence Thompson has raised aloft his banner, "America First!" He has agitated for Mississippi River flood relief. He started the movement to "draft Coolidge" for a third term as president; and to prove his sincerity in this he put his foot down firmly on a move to nominate William Hale Thompson for president of the United States.

Meanwhile the city under his charge, the second city in the richest land in the world, went officially bankrupt. Scores of thousands of school teachers, firemen, policemen, and other civil servants of Chicago have gone months without their pay.

As I write this, William Hale Thompson is once more girding himself for re-election as mayor of Chicago.

Other interesting portraits in the gallery of his political machine would include State's Attorney Crowe, in charge of criminal prosecution during much of Thompson's régime; Corporation Counsel Ettelson, who is known as the "unofficial mayor of Chicago"; ex-Governor Small of Illinois, who was charged with placing \$1,000,000 of the State funds in a bank that did not exist; Frank Smith, elected to the Senate of the United States but rejected by that body because it was so pained by irregularities in the use of Mr. Smith's campaign funds.

As for Mr. Al Capone, he is organizing his industry on a scope that has long outgrown mere Chicago limits. He has merged with interests whose operations range from Atlantic City to St. Louis, from Detroit to the Bahamas, from New York to Denver. United States prohibition enforcement heads have calculated Capone's income alone at something like \$85,000,000 a year.

As this is being written Chicago has begun preparations to hold in 1932 a World's Fair that will excel any fair in history. The good citizens of Chicago admit that their house is badly infested with gangster rats and political vermin. But there is an election due this April and the good citizens hope to call in the exterminator to do the spring cleaning. Enlightened Chicagoans, however, do not feel too hopeful about it. They claim, with good reason, that even if they should succeed in cleaning up their house this spring, they will have their job to do all over again, so long as not their house alone is infested with rats and vermin. New York, Philadelphia, Detroit and other cities are not free of the breed. How then, ask these Chicagoans, can their city single-handed stamp out a plague that is nationwide?



### XIII

## THE MAD GOD OF PALM ISLAND

**I**T is regrettable but not to be denied that to most of us a personal ailment, say a toothache, is more poignant than all the assembled ills of a social order on the other side of the world; or as William James illustrated it, a New Yorker reading his newspaper is affected more by an account of a slight accident on the subway he frequents than by the front page news of an earthquake in Japan that has wiped out of a thousand lives. Among the crimes of the year I have recounted in this series there are murder mysteries of New York, machine-gun massacres in the underworld of Chicago and other reverberations of the steely clash that assails our senses and often our very bodies in this western civilization of ours. Nevertheless in competition with these tales of crime in our immediate world I submit for your interest a tragedy that took place almost a year ago and involved no more than four deaths

on a fairly small island in the Pacific, thirty miles off the northwest coast of Queensland.

To get the essence of this story of Palm Island you must imagine a little self-contained Utopia of aborigines, governed by a giant of the white race, so flamboyant with good looks, so equipped with modern science and so wise in kindness that the primitive souls under his rule, notwithstanding his own teachings, regard him less as a ruler than as a god; not only their tribal god; for since their island seems to them the hub of the world and is a happy island, they feel that the rest of the world too should adopt their god. Then one day this god of theirs goes stark, raging mad. . . . Fictional as this supposition may sound, compare it with the story of Robert Henry Curry and what has happened on Palm Island.

Curry was an Australian and even in his college days was over six feet tall, had burly shoulders, a barrel chest, the limbs of a hammer thrower and the quickness of a lightweight professional prize-fighter. He had a handsome crest of coarse flaming red hair, a wide forehead, vivid sea-green eyes, clear tawny skin, a rugged handsome face; in short, he was a figure that would have stood out in any crowd whether he wanted to or not.

Especially in his college days Curry always not only stood out in any crowd but insisted on doing so. Among his college mates, themselves the brawny

sons of pioneer people, Curry was a colossal nuisance. He never let them forget that he could swim, sprint, jump, vault and fight better than anyone about him. If he could not impress a man with any other prowess of his he did so with his fists. He was a brawler and a bully but seemingly with none of the secret doubts and fears that condition the average bully.

Then the Great War came and gave Curry plenty of outlet for his fighting temper. But his fibre was so tough that the war made it all the tougher. He came back to Australia with citations for bravery but more than ever a nuisance in a peaceable world.

One evening at a dance he saw a trim young woman with a face so pretty and so instinct with dignity and refinement that Curry was strongly attracted. Although she was a stranger to him he planted himself in her path and insisted that she dance with him. She looked him over coolly, and consented.

Her admiration of him, however, although she said little, was so short of what he expected and demanded of women, that he felt challenged. His way of meeting a challenge was always an attack. At the end of his dance he made her face him and said,

“Come on, come on, little lady, give a man a kiss!”

She looked at him quizzically. "Who is the man?"

"I."

It was characteristic of him that he should make his brazen demand with a crowd about him.

"What makes you think," she asked slowly, pointedly, "that you are so much of a man?"

He threw back his head and laughed. "Well," he drawled, "look around and pick out your own idea of a man, any man in this room. And I'll out-run, out-swim, out-wrestle and out-fight your choicest candidate!"

Her look grew more sardonic. "Which does not necessarily make you a man," she retorted. "Almost any four-legged animal can out-run you, a minnow can beat you at swimming. And as for fighting, I think it takes more manhood to teach a school of hostile Bushmen the a b c than to knock one of them out with your fists!"

Something in the character balance of the man found him unprepared for such an attack; for the first time in the knowledge of those who knew him Curry showed himself confused in a battle he had himself brought on.

For a year thereafter this confusion of his grew; all his familiar values seemed to lose worth; lifelong supports tottered; aspects of living which he had despised assumed dignity; new deeds and new vistas developed. This burly man in his late

thirties became as bewildered about life as if he were adolescent again.

But he had a guide through his wilderness; the young woman who had upset him, now patiently, sympathetically then lovingly restored the confused giant of a man to an orderly scheme of living, a new one. She taught school with Bushmen as pupils; now she taught Curry to see that there was adventure and even a new kind of battle in a calling he formerly had thought of as fit only for desiccated old maids.

With her he took up teaching Australian aborigines, always in the same school with her. She, in turn, taught him self-control, then control of others; not the control he used to enforce but a new kind. The blacks he taught were only too eager to be managed by the man who, as they knew, could knock their heads together but who preferred to teach them cricket and carpentry, to raise sheep and to build substantial houses.

In time the Queensland government assigned Curry to bigger and harder posts in the educational work among the aborigines. Curry never accepted a promotion unless it brought with it a place next to him for the woman who was now his wife as well as his guide.

Finally the government turned to Curry with one of its toughest problems, a certain tribe of aborigines. A writer on Australia, Dr. Charles

Pickering, described the race to which this particular tribe belonged. "A typical member of it would make the finest model of the human proportions I have ever met; in muscular development combining perfect symmetry, activity and strength, while his head might have compared with the antique bust of a philosopher."

Perhaps for the very reason that this tribe of a thousand aborigines was so endowed with both muscle and intelligence, they gave the Queensland authorities more trouble than any other natives. Just as in the United States years ago the Indians, deprived of their homeland, used to break out of their reservations and go on warlike rampages, so this tribe of Australians had periodical outbursts of war temper and harassed both their black and their white neighbors.

The Queensland government had herded this tribe together and given them as their home Palm Island, thirty miles off the northeast coast of Queensland. It should have been richly sufficient for them. Eight miles long and four miles wide this sub-tropical South Sea island had everything human beings could ask of a virgin land. Its warm waters simply teemed with life; rainbow-hued edible fishes, some of them weighing hundreds of pounds, darted in and out of the island coves. There was plenty of wild game in the jungles and in the thickly overgrown hills on the island. The soil was

black and rich. Valuable metals, even gold, were underground. The warm climate was tempered with steady cool winds.

But the Palm Islanders preferred to forage on their neighbors, the blacks on nearby islands and on occasion they raided even the white settlements on the mainland. The authorities tried to tame them with a strong military contingent maintained on the island. But force bred violence; there were frequent bloody clashes between the islanders and their white guards; bad blood kept fomenting; and the situation was becoming a scandal embarrassing to the government.

It was in this dilemma that a government official asked Curry and his wife for advice.

Curry said, "Suppose you let us go out there for a while. My wife has had pretty good luck with such problems."

"Good!" said the representative of the government. "We'll make you Superintendent of the island and give you a free hand."

Curry turned to his wife with a question in his eyes. She answered with a look. Curry said to the government official, "We accept."

"Fine! What arms do you want?"

"About fifty guns and ammunition."

"How much of a force?"

"A doctor and a nurse," said Curry.

The government official wondered. "Is that all?"

"Yes."

The government man was puzzled about Curry's modest demands. What could he do with fifty guns against a thousand hostile islanders, with no men to help him fight?

Nevertheless Curry was allowed to have his way and his family was taken to Palm Island. Besides Mrs. Curry there were now Edna, a nine-year-old daughter, the image of her father, and two-year-old Robert, who resembled the mother.

With them also came Dr. Maitland Pattison, a physician, and his wife, a graduate nurse; a couple who had done much fine humane work in the South Sea islands.

The government launch landed them all in the rocky bay that served as harbor for Palm Island. The shore and the heights about it were crowded with the islanders come to look over their new would-be rulers.

They saw the launch land only two men, two women and two children. They saw guns and boxes of ammunition unloaded and piled on the beach.

Then the launch left.

Curry advanced and made a sign for the chief of the islanders to come forward. A dignified aborigine, dressed in native panoply of war, approached and critically looked Curry over.



Curry began with something of his one-time truculence, tempered with a dignity that had come over him since he met his wife. He spoke in a tone that carried.

"I am your new chief," he said. "I am a better man than any of you here in every way. I will prove it. To begin with, who among you is your best swimmer? I will race him across this bay."

The native chief stared, then grinned, partly puzzled, partly amused. Australian natives are perhaps the best swimmers in the world. It would be amusing to teach this ignorant, presumptuous white man, this would-be chief of the island, a lesson from the outset, a lesson he himself invited.

The native chief summoned the champion swimmer of his tribe, a brown young giant who would have delighted a sculptor as a model for a god in ebony.

Curry took off his outer garments and stood by the side of the other. He had on a tight racing shirt and trunks of brilliant red.

Even to the prejudiced eyes of the islanders Curry must have seemed a fine flamboyant figure of a man with his shock of red hair, his splendid shoulders and limbs, his glowing green eyes, the great calm confidence of his smile. All white men, the islanders were convinced, were fools or knaves; this one was undoubtedly a fool, judging by his challenge and by the way he left the guns and

ammunition exposed; but at least he was a gallant fool.

He led the native champion to one tip of the crescent that formed the rocky bay. The naked black man and the white giant in his red swimming suit stood side by side on a slight promontory over the water, poised for a dive. The chief of the tribe, as agreed, raised his spear as a signal. Into the water plunged the two.

As students of swimming know, the "crawl" is based on a stroke used by Australian aborigines; but it was developed and perfected by whites. To the amazement of the blacks who ringed the bay, the white challenger steadily drew ahead of their champion. When at the end of the race the red-clad figure heaved on to the rocks, the black swimmer was still threshing the water.

Curry heartily shook the hand of the defeated champion. Then with the buoyant tread of a demi-god he strode the curve of the beach and rejoined the discomfited islanders. He said,

"Bring on your best leapers and wrestlers and I will take them on!"

He chose of course the kinds of contest at which he excelled. But the natives that afternoon thought he had chosen at random; and they began to think that no matter at what they were skilled this white giant could outdo their best, whether at strength, speed or skill.

Toward the end of the afternoon he approached the pile of rifles on the beach. Loading half a dozen he said to the chief,

“Select five of your best marksmen and I will show them how to use these guns so that they will shoot twice as well as before.”

And for an hour he showed islanders how to handle the guns he had brought.

That night before a great fire on the beach Curry entertained the tribe with a collection of parlor tricks. The astounded natives now decided that the man was endowed with supernatural gifts. Curry heard the murmur,

“Evil magic!”

He laughed, “There is no evil magic in me, not even magic!” he said. “Just a bit of cheating and quickness of the fingers. I’ll show you.”

He exposed every one of his simple tricks. To the delight of his audience, before their very eyes, he even taught two or three of their most intelligent to perform, if somewhat clumsily, some of the “magic” they had believed inspired by evil spirits.

In time the tribesmen learned to believe that there was no evil in this man; but they clung to the conviction that he was endowed with magic. He performed such wonders. He showed them how to use the white man’s improvement of their native swimming stroke; how to play new games; to multiply their yields at fishing and at hunting; how to

build more substantial homes; how to grow vegetables, grains and fruits they had never seen before and how to work hard in the spirit of play.

They laid out cricket and Rugby fields. They made an outdoor theatre and built a recreation hall. They cleared away jungle and converted much of it into grazing grounds and an immense community farm.

Under Dr. Pattison's direction they built a surgery and infirmary and under Mrs. Pattison's charge they put up a pavilion for convalescents.

For Mrs. Curry they outdid themselves in construction of a modern school building. Here the children of the tribe learned reading and writing and arithmetic while their parents were still laboring with the rudiments of these subjects.

Under Curry's friendly driving the islanders modernized their fishing, mined metals, built warehouses and docks and began to export to the mainland.

Eight years after Curry had landed the island was not only self-sufficient humanly and economically but was beginning to accumulate a little gold reserve.

Meanwhile their cricket and Rugby teams were making a reputation on the mainland. To begin with, they were fine specimens physically. Trained and captained by Curry, the island teams acquired

a unique psychological advantage over the whites they met in contest.

For, notwithstanding Curry's own teachings, the islanders persisted, quite literally, in idolizing him. Although they felt the substantial impact of his body in, say football practice, to them he was the incarnation of a god; a kindly god who consorted with humans. Feeling as they did it was no wonder that they played their cricket and their Rugby as if inspired.

About Mrs. Curry the islanders felt, as in the youth of other religions men and women believed, that occasionally a lucky mortal attracts the love of a deity and becomes his mate.

They would never have believed, even if they had known, how much this god of theirs was at heart dependent on the woman. It is likely that Curry himself did not fully realize it, though to a great extent he knew.

But an incident almost betrayed his secret to the island world.

On the beach where Curry had first landed, on the very spot where his fifty guns and ammunition were first piled that memorable day, now stood a shed of corrugated iron. In it were stored the fifty guns and boxes of ammunition. It was the only thing on the island that had not grown with the years. The fact that there was now also a supply of gelignite used for blasting did not alter the fact

that the island arsenal, eight years after Curry had landed, was still practically a useless thing.

There was no lock on the arsenal door. Anyone on the island was free to come and borrow anything in it. It was Curry's way of showing his little world how serene was his faith in it.

Among the few aborigines who found it hardest to adjust themselves to the ways of peace was an unsettled burly young black whom his fellow tribesmen dubbed Mad Jack. Like a hunting dog in uneasy sleep he was beset by dreams of the past. Only that Mad Jack's dreams were not confined to sleep. He was subject to fits of brooding, obsessions that he still lived in a dangerous world, that all the gentleness about him only hid the wiles of enemies. At such times he became ugly and had to be suppressed. On several occasions Dr. Pattison had to take charge of him.

One afternoon Curry and his wife were sitting on the beach near the little arsenal whose open door was so symbolic of peace, when suddenly behind them they heard rapidly approaching shouts. They turned and saw Mad Jack running toward the arsenal. Behind him were a score of the quickest and bravest of the islanders, but they looked alarmed.

"Stop him!" they cried to the Currys. "He has gone mad!"

Curry sprang to his feet. Mad Jack was nearer the arsenal than he was by some twenty yards.

Good at running as Curry still was he could not hope to beat Mad Jack to the open door where the guns and ammunition were stored.

Nevertheless Curry started. It was not only the danger that prompted him. Something in the sight of Mad Jack shocked Curry to a reversion to his young undisciplined self. He saw red. In Mad Jack he saw a killer coming and all the bad memories of the Great War galvanized Curry for the race to the arsenal.

His wife cried out, "Bob, stop!"

For some distance Curry kept on plunging from sheer momentum. Then he stopped.

He came back and sat down by the side of his wife. She did not say another word but he understood her perfectly; or rather he was reminded of reality. Whatever the islanders might fear as to Mad Jack, Curry must show no fear. Mad Jack might or might not cross the border into homicidal mania. In a few moments everything might depend on what the madman saw in the faces before him. The sight of Curry racing for the arsenal could have but one effect on Mad Jack, who was already at the gun racks

Mad Jack came out of the arsenal, over his shoulder two bandoliers full of bullets, in his hands a cocked Lee-Metford rifle.

The islanders stood petrified. The madman

was making for the Currys, on his distorted face a grin.

Could it be that anyone could kill a god? Certainly Mrs. Curry, their teacher, stood on the brink of death. What would the great white man-god do?

They did not hear Mrs. Curry murmur to her husband. The islanders dared not move. The Currys did not move.

Mad Jack towered over them, the muzzle of the gun thrust in Curry's face.

"Now, Boss," Mad Jack laughed, "now *I* am *your* god! Kneel and pray to me now! Pray or I send you to your fathers, you and your woman!"

The islanders could not see Curry's face until he had risen slowly to his feet. Then they heard him laugh, the laughter of an adult who finds a youngster in mischief. They heard Curry's words and they saw him do an amazing, a grotesque thing.

"Jack, you fool boy!" they heard him roar. "You deserve to be shot! No, shooting is too good for you! You should have your backside smacked!"

And actually he smacked Mad Jack on the buttock.

Not even a madman's tragic dignity could withstand the shock of such treatment. Mad Jack clapped his hand to his smarting rear—and all the explosive of the situation turned to a mere squib. The slap shot through his consciousness as through a bad dream and Mad Jack awoke to feel again his



*accustomed awe in the presence of the deity of the island.*

Thereafter he was Curry's most abject worshipper. And worship was what, even more than before, the islanders felt for Curry.

But the worshipped one had had a bad scare. It was not the fear of being killed, I refer to; Curry had only too often faced that. It was his realization that had not his wife checked him in time, he and she not only would have been killed but the little world they had so laboriously built up might have been shaken to its foundations. More than ever Curry now felt to the core of his being what his wife meant to him.

Then last May, Mrs. Curry suddenly died.

The whole tribe was at her burial.

They all felt profound grief at the loss of their teacher. But what haunted them most was the sight of what her death seemed to have done to the man they were sure had a god's immunity to the griefs of life.

At first this giant looked as stricken as a child too ill to cry. For days he neither ate nor drank; nor did he budge out of the room that had been hers.

Edna, his daughter, now a gloriously limbed and refined image of her father, in desperation shook him by the shoulders to rouse him. Robert, her brother now eleven, wept as he pleaded with his father. It was as if they were not there. Dr. Patti-

son could do nothing with him, nor could his wife. Old Man Wamba, a native who had been closest companion to Curry, could do nothing with him. Mad Jack went almost mad again because his master looked through him as if through space.

Neither hunger nor thirst seemed to move Curry. He sat in his wife's darkened room and stared.

No one was with Curry when the next change took place in him. In the light of what we know now we can venture to read the catastrophe that had come to the man's nature with the loss of the woman about whom he had rebuilt his whole character and life. With her loss must have come an overturn of his sense of reality. In his own way Curry must have then got the same delusion of hostility about him that was Mad Jack's in his periods of insanity. No one was to be trusted; not his children, not Dr. Pattison, not Old Man Wamba. Their very solicitude towards him made Curry suspect them.

Suspicion turned to fear; and with brooding the unaccustomed fear turned to fury. Mania, the crafty mania of a mind once rich with resources, stole upon him.

On the tenth night after his wife's funeral Curry got out of bed so quietly that his children, sleeping in adjoining bedrooms, did not hear him.

He put on the swimming suit of fiery red in which he had first impressed the islanders ten years

before. Barefooted he stole to the little infirmary which stood between his house and Dr. Pattison's.

Here he filled a hypodermic needle with a solution of morphine.

Returning to his house with it he softly entered his daughter's bedroom. Before she could cry out his great hand was tight over her mouth. With his other hand he sank the hypodermic needle into her arm and pressed the little piston to the limit. When she had ceased to struggle he rose and left the bedroom.

Ten minutes later it was his son who was unconscious from a heavy hypodermic dose of morphine.

Curry had done it all so quietly that Mad Jack, who slept in the house as a self-appointed bodyguard to Curry, did not hear him. Curry's next move was a trip to the arsenal on the beach.

When he came back to the house he was wearing three bandoliers of bullets. A revolver was in each of the three holsters. A loaded rifle was in his hands. Under each arm was a small bomb of gelignite, fuses attached.

He placed one bomb under his daughter's bed, another under his son's. With all the care of an experienced worker with explosives he ignited a time fuse on each bomb.

Then he entered Mad Jack's room. The native awoke and stared at his master.

The sight was enough to send a contagion of mad fear through the islander.

"Jack," Curry whispered, "you believe what I tell you, don't you?"

"Yes, Boss!"

"Then," handing Jack a revolver and a bandolier, "take these and come with me."

The terrified follower of Curry, terrified not of his master but at the fear he saw on the face of his god, followed him out of the house.

"Jack," Curry whispered, "I have just learned that the whole island has turned against you and me. My own children—Dr. Pattison and his wife—Old Man Wamba—everybody!"

Even as he spoke, the world rocked with an explosion; then another came. Before Mad Jack's eyes the main house suddenly rose in the air.

"Quick!" Curry yelled. "Follow me!"

Mad Jack followed, his own madness in full career after Curry's.

Curry had already brought a number of cans of gasoline into the schoolhouse and into the infirmary. The two madmen kicked them over, then threw lighted wads of paper into the two buildings.

The night lit up with the mounting flames.

"Quick, Jack!" Curry cried. "To Dr. Pattison's!"

Awakened by the explosions Dr. Pattison was hurriedly dressing when Curry burst into his room.

"Curry, for God's sake—!" the doctor shouted.

Curry's rifle was at his shoulder and Dr. Pattison fell, shot through the thigh.

Mrs. Pattison had been sitting up with a patient on the other side of the house. She had fallen asleep but like everyone else on the island she was awakened by the explosions.

Half dressed she ran out of the room, and was confronted by Curry, clad in his red bathing suit, the bandoliers about his chest, a gun in his hands. Over his shoulder she saw the gleaming face of Mad Jack. Before she could say a word she too fell to the floor, shot through the body.

"Down to the boats!" Curry roared.

Mad Jack followed.

They went by way of the arsenal where Curry caught up a stick of dynamite. The two then ran to the dock where a big launch and a smaller one were moored, the only speed boats on the island.

Curry threw the explosive into the big launch and blew it up.

Then he and Mad Jack jumped into the smaller one. Curry threw off its moorings and started the engine. Mad Jack took the wheel and the roaring power boat headed for the east where the dawn was beginning to show.

Curry stood in the stern of the boat, facing the land, his rifle in his hands.

Over the rocks of the bay came the aroused

islanders. As yet they did not know fully what was happening. Dr. Pattison and his wife, both badly wounded, had given broken accounts of the calamity. The islanders saw the Curry home a mass of wreckage, the schoolhouse and the infirmary were burning.

They raced to the harbor where they heard another explosion.

By the gathering light of the tropical dawn Mad Jack was steering the small power boat. And the islanders saw their island's deity in the scant red swimming suit he wore the day when they first saw him.

But this time he was standing at the stern of the fleeing power boat, shouting with insanity, shooting at them as long as they were in sight.

When the power boat was gone they had only canoes with which to pursue. There was nothing the islanders could do now but wait for whatever should next come from the inscrutable powers that had stricken mad the god of their island.

Broad daylight came on. Then the distracted islanders heard returning the purr of the motor boat that had taken away Curry and Mad Jack. There they were again. As before Mad Jack was at the wheel. By his side stood Curry, still clad in red, bandoliers on his chest, a rifle still in his hands.

Old Man Wamba ran to where Dr. Pattison lay, half unconscious and writhing with pain.

"Doctor," Old Man Wamba cried, "he is coming back! What shall we do?"

"Wamba, he has gone mad!" Dr. Pattison said. "He has murdered his children! You see what he has done to me and my wife! He must not be allowed to land!"

"How can we stop him?"

"Shoot him!"

Old Man Wamba threw up his hands. "*Shoot him? Him?*"

"Or he will kill others!"

Old Man Wamba did not know where else to turn for guidance. Mrs. Curry was dead. Both her children were dead. Mrs. Pattison was unconscious, probably dying. Dr. Pattison was in authority now, both officially and by virtue of what he knew.

Old Man Wamba hurried down to the shore and called to him a score of the wisest and most influential of the islanders. With their eyes on the approaching launch they listened to Dr. Pattison's message.

They had not much time for debate. The decision was, if Curry was a god nothing they could do would either appease or hurt him; if, as Dr. Pattison insisted, he was only a madman, there was but one thing they would do. They would offer no human sacrifices to a madman.

A score of the islanders ran to the arsenal and

snatched up arms. Then they scattered and hid among the rocks on the shore.

On came the launch, headed for their island harbor. Mad Jack was still at the wheel, Curry still standing by his side. His rifle began to spurt fire again.

From behind the rocks, in reply came rifle fire.

The huge figure of Curry, crumpled; hung precariously over the rail and stayed so.

Mad Jack dropped where he stood and the wheel kicked free of his grasp.

With throttle wide open the power boat rushed at the land and splintered on the rocks. . . .

The islanders buried Mad Jack as they would a mad dog.

Over Curry's burial the tribe reverted to their most ancient fears and superstitions such as the Currys had labored for years to root out of them.

But there on the bier was the white giant body, in the red swimming suit, riddled with bullets, terribly inert. Something had departed, something that had been more than man, the islanders now believed more than ever. What would that something do to them out of the invisible where it now was?

So they lavished on his burial every bit of love, grief, fear and petition they could put into their farewell.

Two days later a native canoe reached the



shore of the mainland near Townsville, northern Queensland, and two aborigines, exhausted and still terrified, stammered out the story of how the god of Palm Island had abandoned them.

THE END









